

John
Wesley

J W Burbridge



LIVES THAT SPEAK.

JOHN WESLEY.

LIVES THAT SPEAK.

A NEW SERIES OF POPULAR BIOGRAPHIES.

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John Wesley

LIVES THAT SPEAK.

JOHN WESLEY.

BY

REV. JAMES J. ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF

"TAKE FAST HOLD," "MARKED FOR DEATH," ETC. ETC.

"A friend, sincere and true,
Kind looks foretold as kind a heart within;
Words as they sounded meant; and promises
Were made to be performed."—POLLOK.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCXCI.

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P R E F A C E.



JOHN WESLEY has long since been admitted to the first rank of Christian heroism and service. His self-sacrifice, patience, courage, talents for administration, and, above all, the concentration of his powers upon what he considered the chief business of life, all mark him out as entitled to be placed in the van of the Christian host.

The denomination that he founded is still the largest section of Protestant Dissenters, and not the least in self-sacrifice and devotion to the service of God and man.

Those who are outside this community are the most ready to acknowledge their many obligations to the Methodists, to admire their fervour, and to thank God for them.

This year commemorates the centenary of Wesley's entrance into heaven ; it therefore furnishes a sufficient reason for re-studying his character and life.

For John Wesley is still a living force working

amidst us; such a life as his will never be without interest and value to all who admire worth and love their kind. And for our inspiration and comfort God has rewarded his service by making his name fragrant to all lovers of evangelical truth.

But after all, the most suitable form of honouring Wesley is to cleave to the Saviour whom he loved with fervent faith, and to continue his service among the outcasts of our land.

The Wesleyans are wise in their resolve to make the centenary as far as possible a beginning of new enterprises. The debt that all the churches acknowledge will be best discharged by a strenuous attempt to deal with the vast multitude of heathen who perish at our very doors.

Wesley heard their cry, and although they resented his preaching and ill-used him, he continued to evangelise until he had disarmed opposition, and, by Divine grace, won many of them to new thoughts, purposes, and hopes.

In some respects the religious and social outlook is not encouraging; but, as Sir Charles Napier said that difficulties only made his feet go deeper into the soil, so should it be with us; there are difficulties in our path, but they should only deepen our resolve to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

This is to honour Wesley and to glorify God.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, in this month's *Nineteenth Century*, says:—"All modern religious history is summed up in the two momentous facts that Ignatius Loyola has captured the Catholic Churches and that John Wesley has captured the Evangelical Churches. Jesuitism and Methodism, these are the two ultimate forms of intense, logical, thorough-going Christianity. Absolute subjection to the Church, or absolute subjection to the Christ, there is no other alternative for the enthusiastic 'out and out' Christian of the twentieth century."

Mr. Hughes says of Wesley:—"He was the first great religious teacher in modern times who heartily accepted the Baconian principle of verification in the region of theology. . . . He was the earliest of scientific theologians. Hence nothing that criticism in history may yet reveal can shake the foundations of his faith, which rested not upon external authority or intellectual speculation, but upon the direct experience of human consciousness, summed up at last in the triumphant exclamation of his dying lips, 'The best of all is, God is with us!'"

This is high praise, but it is not too high, for Wesley was immeasurably in advance of his age, and accelerated to a remarkable degree the sweep of religious and social progress. A careful study of his life must deepen in every heart the conviction that he

was emphatically a great man, and would have been a great leader of men in any age or under any circumstances. Had he been born under Papal rule, he would have become the founder of a new order of service, or perhaps risen to the highest place. Had he been born in the present generation, he would probably have adapted his methods to the requirements of the present era, but he would have stood out emphatically as a born king and ruler of men.

It was his high privilege to think such high thoughts, that after his death, they became practical forces that are reproducing themselves to-day. Dr. Stephenson says, "Let any man inquire into the origin of the anti-slavery crusade, of cheap literature, of Sunday-schools and elementary education, of our hospitals for the sick, and of our rescue and reformatory schools, and he will be surprised to find that almost without exception these things, which from a social as well as a religious point of view are the glory of the Victorian age, took their rise in that enthusiasm of humanity which sprung up with and in the revived religious life of the nation."

This is high praise, but it is deserved, and the practical and philanthropic spirit of its founder has ever been characteristic of the Methodist body. Emphatically must it characterise all the Churches, for a social element is a part of the Gospel, and while its

first purpose is undoubtedly to qualify man for heaven, the second and equally needful work of the Gospel is to fit him for life upon earth. Our Lord healed the sick and fed the hungry, and these have always been accompaniments of healthy Christianity. For sound dogma must provoke healthy and self-sacrificing efforts for the good of others, and we only believe rightly as we exhibit our faith and keep it true by our works.

The best way to commemorate Wesley would be for all the Evangelical Churches to combine for one gigantic effort to deal with the misery, hopelessness, and vice of our great cities, and principally of London. The task is truly appalling, but it is possible; if half the strength at present wasted upon controversy and truths of no practical importance were devoted to a sublime effort to regenerate England, the task would be accomplished.

This will be in measure attained as each Christian seeks to be in his circle what Wesley was and ever will be, an ambassador for Christ by the grace of God.

“GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE.”

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JOHN WESLEY.



CHAPTER I.

THE PROPHET WHO WAS THE SON OF A PROPHET.

“To guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing, worship God aright,
. . . This attracts the soul.”—MILTON.

“Depend upon it that the only luck is merit, and that no young man will make his way unless he possesses knowledge and exerts all his powers in the accomplishment of his designs.”—GEORGE MOORE.



1683-1703.

“ONE-EYED CHRISTIANS”—“OUT OF THIS MUD”—“WHERE DO YOU BUY YOUR CANDY?”—NEARLY CAPTURING A PRINCE—
“MEN OF GLASS”—IN THE FENS—DEAR BREAD—AN UNBROTHERLY BROTHER—“WASHING HIS MOUTH OUT”—“LIKE TO AN OWL IN AN IVY-BUSH.”

“I do love those one-eyed Christians,” said a quaint wit when speaking of the early Methodists. He probably thus alluded to their frequent expression, “A single eye to the glory of God.” But the phrase sets

forth the characteristic and strength of the great religious revival under Wesley and Whitfield—it was *one-eyed*. The leaders of this second Reformation were “one-eyed Christians,” and therefore it was that they were able to achieve such marvellous results in spiritual and moral reformation.

It is true that a great social change in the thoughts, habits, and circumstances of the nation accompanied the revival, and to such a degree that the England after Wesley was utterly unlike the violent fierce mob to whom he at first preached; but this social amelioration always appears when evangelical religion is faithfully proclaimed. Soap and water, sanitary science, and care for the poor and oppressed are all consequences of a true religious life—they are attendants of the Gospel. The social progress made was indeed only a natural benefit conferred by the religious advance.

The revival was also an intellectual awakening, and that amongst the poor and uneducated. They, under its influence, learned to read their Bibles, or they heard them read, and awaking to mental activity, they became human, and therefore capable of further education. For all true education is religious in its tendency, and the Bible has always acted thus upon the brutal and degraded who have come under its influence, and has thus made them men.

The revival also set England singing, and thus it made the scenes where it reigned a “merrie England,” as it had never been before.

It cared for the children, and through Sunday-schools it acted as a preventive police agency that averted a revolution, and has all but trampled out the infidelity that then spread like tares among the wheat. Under Howard, who was fully possessed by its spirit, it visited the prisons and taught a new style of philanthropy to those who had hitherto regarded criminals as only fit for hanging. This was simply an act of obedience to the explicit command of the Gospel, and it resulted from submission to the Divine Spirit.

All these, and many other efforts (some of which assumed such gigantic proportions as to amount to independent reproductive revolutions), were all subsidiary to the main purpose of this one-eyed movement; for Wesley and his helpers mainly aimed at setting men right with God first, after which they knew that men would settle into right relations with each other. The revival brought a new hope into men's lives, and therefore it was a powerful force in the regeneration of our nation. Only by one-eyed movements and through one-eyed leaders alone will any permanent reformation in morals and character be accomplished. Progress is first redemption and then comfort; first it cleanses the character, and then it purifies its surroundings.

And there was sore need for such a man as Wesley, for the United Kingdom of that day was united only in misery, depravity, and ignorance. "Out of this mud Italy must be made," said Cavour when speak-

ing of his own nation. Out of the black foul mud of the England of that time the great revival has made the Britain of to-day. When George III. came to the throne, there were but five millions of people in England, and these were brutalised by the very law of the land. "Nothing strikes us more, when we study those times, than the ease with which a man might get himself hanged; and it seems strange that so many centuries passed before our legislators learned the wisdom of the saying, 'It is the worst use to which you can put a man'" (Loftie). In one year thirteen youths were executed at one time at Tyburn, and the eldest of them was only twenty-two years of age.

But not only did the law brutalise, there were other degrading forces at work. The pastimes of the people were corrupting, and this is one of the greatest evils of any age. There runs a story that a child was once found in the streets of a western city in America. She was lost, and she could not give an account of her parents, nor even remember where they lived. But a shrewd child stepped up to the foundling and asked, "Where do you buy your candy?" The child at once made answer; she did not know her parents' address, but she did know where the candy-shop was situated. "Where do you buy your candy?" is a wonderful test of character; for men show what they are by the kind of candy they prefer. In the England of that day the sports of the people were corrupting and brutal; for candy they had mainly bear-baiting, bull-baiting, cock-

fighting, and what is foolishly called the "noble art"—that is, of two men injuring each other.

There were, it is true, many earnest and self-denying preachers and reformers, but they were too few and too much despised to be able to accomplish much in the way of social advance. Peers of the realm were known to sell their chaplaincies at prices varying from twelve to twenty guineas; and from a letter in the Winchelsea MSS. we extract an anecdote which tells its own tale. A clergyman who had been promised a certain living by a deceased Earl thus complains to the nobleman's successor: "A wife was never whispered to me until a day after my lord's death. Then, indeed, my lady herself told me that her maid, Morfee, was always intended to go along with the living, and that if I intended to make her ladyship my friend, I must not refuse the offer."

"We have to conceive of a state of society divested of all the educational, philanthropic, and benevolent activities of modern times. There were no Sunday-schools and few day-schools," says Paxton Hood. Into such a condition of need John Wesley was born on the 17th of June 1703. These realms were then in a state of want—that is, of not having; and we only learn what Wesley was when we observe the degree to which these wants were supplied by him and by his preachers.

Schools of the prophets were found useful even by the greatest of that order, if he did not found them. God prepared for the training of John Wesley through several

generations of godly men. That which they gradually and in a small degree accomplished, he did upon a nobler scale; but Wesley was as much a reward of his ancestors' suffering for truth, as he was the gift of God to the world.

His great-grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley, was a Puritan, as almost all earnest men were in heart at that day. Bartholomew narrowly missed the chance of capturing the royal profligate who was afterwards known, to the shame of Britain, as Charles the Second. Had the "pitiful, dwindling parson," as his enemies called him, captured Charles, it would have been for the advantage of these realms.

John Wesley, the son of this worthy divine, was the minister at Poole; and the son of this John Wesley, Samuel Wesley by name, was the father of John Wesley the second, and therefore the grandfather of the Methodist movement.

"As far as we can trace them back, we find Mr. Wesley's ancestors appear respectable for learning, conspicuous for piety, and firmly attached to those new views of Christianity which they had learned from the Scripture," says Dr. Clarke.

Not one of them appears to have been what Rutherford calls "a professor of glass." "I see many professors who, for the sake of appearance, follow me, but they are *professors of glass*. I would cause a little knock of persecution to break them into twenty pieces, and so the world would laugh at the shreds."

None of the Wesleys were men of glass. Christian

men were made of stern stuff in those days, in order to withstand the hard blows that they received. Certainly the father of John Wesley was no man of glass. Alas ! his life is a pathetic, heroic struggle with difficulties and troubles. He gave early proof of his independent spirit when a youth. He had been placed at a Dissenting academy, but he left it and entered himself as a servitor at Oxford. This was in 1683, and "during the first winter of his residence at Oxford the frost and cold were so severe that coaches plied freely on the Thames from the Temple to Westminster, as if they had gone on upon the land." In 1685 he published a book which bore the singular title of "Maggots." The titles of the poems in this book were such as "The Grunting of a Hog," "To my Gingerbread Mistress," "A Pair of Breeches," "A Tobacco Pipe," "A Supper of a Duck," "A Box like an Egg," and "A King turned Thrasher." In 1688, when he left the University, he was seven pounds fifteen shillings in advance of the world, and therefore to that amount its master. Samuel Wesley first became a curate, then a chaplain on board a man-of-war, after which experience of life he settled down in a London curacy, and married upon an income of sixty pounds a year.

In August 1690 the London curate became Vicar of Ormsby, from which place, seven years afterwards, he moved to Epworth, in the Fen country of Lincolnshire.

Charles Kingsley dearly loved the Fens. "They have a beauty of their own, those great Fens—a beauty as

of the sea, of boundless expanse and freedom. Overhead the arch of heaven spreads more ample than elsewhere, and that vastness gives such cloudlands, such sunrises, as can be seen nowhere else within these isles." He admired "the shining meres, the golden reed-beds, the countless waterfowl, the strange and gaudy insects, the wild nature, the mystery, the majesty which had haunted the deep Fen for many hundred years."

Had the eloquent Canon been required to face the conditions of difficulty that prevailed at either Epworth or Wroote, he might perhaps have altered his opinion of the Fens. The natives of Epworth then were rude, fierce, and revengeful; the Rector's daughter sketched some of them in the following lines:—

"High births and virtue equally they scorn,
As asses dull on dunghill born;
Impervious as the stones their heads are found,
Their rage and hatred steadfast as the ground."

Samuel Wesley's life at Epworth was a long forty years' struggle with poverty, which privation was accentuated by worse troubles. The Fenmen fired his ricks, destroyed his crops, killed his cows, and finally they succeeded in casting him into jail. Mrs. Wesley (of whom more presently) tells an affecting anecdote behind which we can read a terrible daily life of martyrdom.

"The late Archbishop of York," she wrote to her brother, "once said to me in Lincoln Castle, among other things, 'Tell me,' said he, 'Mrs. Wesley,

whether you ever really wanted bread?' 'My Lord,' said I, 'I will freely own to your Grace that, strictly speaking, I never did want bread. But then I had so much care to get it before it was ate, and to pay for it after, as has often made it very unpleasant to me. And I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to having none at all.' 'You are certainly right,' said my Lord, and seemed for awhile very thoughtful. Next morning he made me a handsome present, nor did he ever repent having done so. On the contrary, I have reason to believe it afforded him comfortable reflections before his exit."

And well it might, for in helping the poor struggling parson the Archbishop was helping the coming Reformation. John Wesley is a heroic figure, but it may well be doubted whether, when all things are considered, his father battling with poverty and his many bitter enemies at Epworth was not equally heroic.

As a contrast to the conduct of the kindly Archbishop, it is related that the Rector's brother once administered to Samuel Wesley a most unbrotherly and undeserved rebuke. This brother, Matthew Wesley by name, was a London doctor, and one day he ventured to penetrate into the recesses of the Fens.

"He was strangely scandalised at the poverty of our furniture, and much more at the meanness of the children's habit," said Mrs. Wesley. "He always talked more freely with your sisters [daughters of the Rector] of our circumstances than to me [Mrs. Wesley],

and told them he wondered what his brother had done with his income, for it was visible he had not spent it in furnishing his house or clothing his family."

Not content with thus talking to his nieces against their father, the physician upon his return home wrote to his brother a letter which remains as a brand upon his own memory. He said: "The same record which assures us an infidel cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, also asserts in the consequence that a worse than an infidel can never do it. It likewise describes the character of such an one: 'He provides not for his own, especially those of his own house.'

"You have a numerous offspring; you have had a long time a plentiful estate, great and generous benefactions, and have made no provision for those of your own house, who can have nothing in view at your exit but distress. This I think a black account, let the case be folly, or vanity, or ungovernable appetites. I hope Providence has restored you again to give you time to settle this balance, which shocks me to think of. A serious consideration of these things and suitable actions, I doubt not, will qualify you to meet me where sorrow shall be no more."

This unbrotherly and unjust epistle provoked the Rector to a vindication. This took the form of a humorous setting forth of the real facts of the case. After enumerating his sources of income, and also the expenses to which he had been of necessity put, Samuel Wesley concludes: "Let all this be balanced,

and then a guess may be easily made of his sorry management. He can struggle with the world, but not with Providence; nor can he resist sickness, fires, and inundations." Of this letter Dr. Clarke says that "it is a most complete and happy refutation of his brother's charges, and of those who have felt inclined to repeat them. When we consider his expenses, and the numerous family he brought up, we may be well surprised how, with so small an income, he was able to meet and cover such great demands."

Another anecdote of the Rector exhibits not only his courage, but his tact. He was in a coffee-house in London when an officer of the Guards, who was also in the room, swore most fearfully. Mr. Wesley desired the waiter to fetch him a glass of water. When this request was complied with, he said, "Carry it to the gentlemen in the red coat, and desire him to wash his mouth after his oaths." The officer was enraged at the reproof, but he subsequently told Mr. Wesley that from that day he had never used an oath.

We cannot refrain from repeating two anecdotes of the parish clerk at Epworth. It is said that that functionary, who was extremely vain both of his office and of himself, upon one occasion gave out a hymn that commenced thus, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God a hymn of my own composing—

‘King William is come home, come home,
King William home is come,
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's called Te D'um.’”

Arrayed in one of the parson's old wigs, the parish clerk, to the amusement of the congregation, read out one day—

“ Like to an owl in an ivy-bush,
That rueful thing am I.”

Such troubles were, however lightly borne, and perhaps they served to lighten a dark life. It is, however, a mystery of Providential love that some lives are permitted to be one long defeat and suffering, and that through no discernible fault of their own. The saintly Rutherford exclaims, “How soon would faith freeze without a cross! How many dumb crosses have been laid upon my back, that had never a tongue to speak the sweetness of Christ! When Christ blesseth His own crosses with a tongue, they breathe out Christ's love, wisdom, kindness, and care of us.”

Yet it is not always possible for us to view these troubles so complacently as did this holy man. It were better for us if we could do so. Some lives are evidently intended only to be pedestals upon which others can be reared to receive the honour of men. So was it with Samuel Wesley. He lived and toiled in obscurity and penury, but he trained the great Apostle of Methodism. In speaking of the enormous mission of Methodism, we must never forget the lofty praise that is due to both Samuel Wesley and his wife. Without such parents, seeing that God works through natural causes, the great revival would have been impossible.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE FIRE, BUT NOT BURNED; OR, SPARED TO SERVE.

“God works in all things; all obey
His first propulsion from the night.
Wake then and watch! The world is grey
With morning light.”—WHITTIER.

“But martyrs struggle for a nobler prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free.”

1703-1720.

A PRICELESS WOMAN—THE TWENTIETH TIME CROWNS IT—“A
BRAND SNATCHED FROM THE BURNING”—LITTLE OR GREAT,
OR WHICH WAS TO BE DESPISED?—A SCHOOLBOY WHO READ
HIS BIBLE.

NAPOLEON once said that the chief want of France was
mothers. The saying is probably as true as similar
general expressions are. One thing is certain, that
is, that Methodism has been singularly rich in the
character of its women. Indeed, those who are out-
side this community can perhaps better estimate the

sweetness, devotion, and talents of the Methodist women than those of their own Church. And this is possibly a denominational characteristic because of the virtues of Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley. Of her, Dr. Adam Clarke, who was no mean judge, bore testimony thus : " I have been acquainted with many pious females ; I have read the lives of others ; but such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I ever been acquainted. Such an one Solomon has described at the end of his Proverbs ; and adapting his words, I can say, ' Many daughters have done virtuously, but SUSANNA WESLEY has excelled them all.' "

This is high praise from such a man, but it seems to have been deserved—well deserved, judging from all the evidence that has reached us. It is pleasing to read the portrait that her husband, the Epworth Rector, drew of his wife in his " Life of Christ."

He says—

" She graced my humble roof and blest my life,
Blest me with a far greater name than wife ;
Yet still I bore an undisputed sway,
Nor was 't her task, but pleasure to obey ;
Scarce thought, much less could act, what I denied.
In our low house there was no room for pride ;
Nor need I e'er direct what still was right,
She studied my convenience and delight.
Nor did I for her care ungrateful prove,
But only used my power to show my love ;
Whate'er she asked, I gave without reproach or grudge,
For still she reason asked, and I was judge.
All my commands, requests at her fair hands ;
And her requests to me were all commands.

To other thresholds rarely she'd incline ;
Her house her pleasure was—and she was mine ;
Rarely abroad, or never, but with me,
Or when by pity called or charity."

All the Wesley children were trained at home and taught by their mother, and her methods proved to be singularly successful.

In a letter which she long afterwards sent to her son John, this famous woman thus describes her method : "The children were always put into a regular method of living in such things as they were capable of from their birth, as in dressing, undressing, &c. The first three months commonly passed in sleep. After that they were, if possible, laid into their cradle awake and rocked to sleep, and so they were kept rocking until it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping, which at first was three hours in the morning, and three in the afternoon ; afterwards two hours, till they needed none at all. When turned a year old (and some before), they were taught to fear the rod and to cry softly, by which means they escaped abundance of correction which they might otherwise have had, and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house, but the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them.

"As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their

little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked; and they were suffered to eat and drink as much as they would, but not to call for anything. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family.

“At six, as soon as family prayer was over, they had their supper; at seven the maid washed them, and beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight, at which time she left them in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed of in our house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.

“They were so constantly used to eat and drink what was given them, that when any of them was ill there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine; for they durst not refuse it.

“They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted. They were not suffered to ask even the lowest servant for ought without saying, ‘Pray give me such a thing,’ and the servant was chid if she ever let them omit that word.

“There were several bye-laws observed among us. I mention them here because I think them useful.

“First, it had been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment often lead children into lying, till they

get a custom of it which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law was made that whoever was charged with a fault of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it and promise to amend, should not be beaten. This rule prevented a great deal of lying.

“Second, that no sinful action, as lying, pilfering, playing at church or on the Lord’s day, disobedience, quarrelling, &c., should ever pass unpunished.

“Third, that no child should be ever chid or beat twice for the same fault, and that if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterwards. That if ever any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness directed to do better for the future.

“That promises be strictly observed, and a gift once bestowed be not resumed.”

This interesting document is as much a revelation of Mrs. Wesley’s own character as it is of the home that she created. She was herself the teacher of her children, a task for which she was singularly fitted. At the age of five years each child was taken in hand by her, and, with the exception of two, each pupil learned the alphabet in a day. The lesson was studied until it was quite mastered, an instance of perseverance on the part of the teacher which is remarkable. Her husband even complained of this

line-upon-line system. "I wonder at your patience," he said; "you have told that child twenty times that same thing." "Had I been satisfied with mentioning the matter only nineteen times," said Mrs. Wesley, "I should have lost all my labours. You see it was the twentieth time that crowned the whole." Which saying deserves to be written in letters of gold upon every heart, for it is the twentieth time of doing it that makes all the difference between success and failure. What is worth having is seldom won without the twentieth effort, but then the prize is sufficient to reward each and all of the attempts that have appeared to be wasted. Every mother should not only herself be willing to teach for the twentieth time, but she should inculcate as an unfailing maxim that the twentieth time crowns the whole. Do right again, and yet again, and until it shall prosper, even until twenty times twenty, and you will by that means acquire such a love for it that you will never desist. Nor, while the children were thus instructed in learning and morality, were they neglected in the more important concerns of the soul. "I take such a portion of time as I can best spare every night to discourse with every child by itself on something that relates to its principal concerns," says Mrs. Wesley. "On Monday I talk with Molly, on Tuesday with Hetty, Wednesday with Nancy, Thursday with Jackey, Friday with Patty, Saturday with Charles, and with Emilia and Sukey together on Sunday."

Such patient personal diligent training explains the

eminence of the Wesleys; but, as with many other great works, the reward was deferred. For years the family were in such sore straits, that for seven successive winters the father had to come to London in order to obtain money wherewith to sustain his family. The daughter who records this fact says, "Then I learned what it was to seek money for bread, seldom having any without such hardships in getting it that much abated the pleasure of it." Mrs. Wesley herself says, "It is certainly true that I have had a large experience of what the world calls adverse fortune."

Poverty is most attractive in poetry or in fiction, but in real life it means intolerable suffering, acute and heart-rending anxiety, and the paralysis of many mental activities; and this the Wesleys knew by bitter experience. Besides this chronic trouble, there were many severe trials in the Wesley home. Thus, on the 9th of February 1709, the Rectory took fire, and John narrowly escaped with his life. All the family were in bed, when one of the children observed that some fire had fallen upon her bed. She called her father, who had heard the cry of fire from the street, but who could not realise that it was his own house that was in flames. The peril was indeed great, for the flames had reached the roof, and the thatch was in a blaze. The fire leaped through the wall of the staircase, and the family were compelled to hurry out of the house without waiting for their clothes. Mrs. Wesley, who was in feeble health, was beaten back by the flames.

“She thought to have died there, but prayed to Christ to help her. She found new strength, got up alone, and waded through two or three yards of flame, the fire on the ground being up to her knees.” The children were counted, and believed to have all been rescued, when a cry for help was heard. It was John Wesley, who was then six years old. He had been forgotten by the maid, and he had woken from sleep to see the house on fire. He climbed upon the chest that stood before the window, and called for help. “I ran in again to go upstairs, but the staircase was all afire,” says the Rector. “I tried to force up through it a second time, holding my breeches over my head, but the stream of fire beat me down. I thought I had done my duty; went out of the house to that part of my family I had saved in the garden, with the killing cry of my child in my ears. I made them all kneel down, and we prayed God to receive his soul.”

But help was at hand; one man mounted upon the shoulders of a friend, and thus the boy was lifted out of danger. And only just in time, for as he was taken out of the window the roof fell inwards. The delighted father cried out, “Come, neighbours, kneel down; let us give thanks to God! He has given me all my eight children; let the house go; I am rich enough.” This remarkable deliverance was commemorated in several of his portraits, beneath which a house in flames was represented, with the inscription beneath,

“Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” This calamity for some time disarranged the mother’s careful plans and education. For nearly a year the children were distributed in various homes, where they were permitted to do as they pleased. Mrs. Wesley, upon their return home, had to undo the mischief that they had learned before they were able to recommence the difficult task before them of fitting themselves for the labour and reward of life. It would seem that John Wesley’s narrow escape from death attracted the attention of his parents to him. “I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that Thou hast so mercifully provided for than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of Thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success.”

During the following year, that is, in 1712, Mrs. Wesley read with much interest an account of the labours of the Danish missionaries in the East Indies. This book prompted her to hold services in her kitchen for her children and servants. As many as two hundred people were present at one meeting, and many others were turned away from the door for lack of room. These services must have been of immense help to her own children, and may be accounted as a chief force in their training.

In the April of this year of 1712 the smallpox broke out in the parsonage. John took it, and, said

his mother, "Jack has borne his disease bravely, like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without any complaint, though he seemed angry at the smallpox when they were sore, as we guessed by his looking sourly at them, for he never said anything."

"This calmness was characteristic of the boy, for from early childhood John was remarkable for his sober and studious disposition, and seemed to feel himself answerable to his reason and his conscience for everything he did. He would do nothing without first reflecting on its fitness and propriety. If asked, out of the common way of meals, to have, for instance, a piece of bread or fruit, he would answer with the coolest unconcern, 'I thank you; I will think of it.' To argue about a thing seemed instinctive, and was carried to such a length, that on one occasion his father almost chid him, saying, 'Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find how little is ever done in the world by close reasoning.' 'I profess, sweetheart,' said the Rector in a pet to Miss Wesley—'I profess, sweetheart, I think our Jack would not attend to the most pressing necessities of nature unless he could give a reason for it'" (Tyerman).

Such a child was predisposed to religious influences, and we are not at all surprised to learn that John Wesley gave such early and strong proofs of piety that his father admitted him to Holy Communion at the age of eight years. It was meet that the Apostle of

England should be hampered by no memories of youthful follies and sins.

“ The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day.”

That is, with some exceptions ; and a pure and devout and conscientious childhood was no bad preparation for the work that lay before John Wesley.

At the age of ten years and a half, John Wesley left home for the Charterhouse School in London. He was admitted 28th January 1714.

For this school Wesley ever retained a strong affection, yet it was to some extent a house of bondage to him. The elder boys took the animal food from the juniors, so that Wesley says, “ From ten to fourteen I had little but bread to eat, and not great plenty of that. I believe that this was so far from hurting me, that it laid the foundation of lasting health.” One command of his father’s the boy always obeyed, and that was, that he should run round the large garden of the school three times every morning.

His eldest brother, Samuel, had also come up to London ; he was labouring as usher in Westminster School. He wrote home and said, probably much to the Rector’s comfort, “ My brother Jack, I can faithfully assure you, gives you no manner of discouragement from breeding your third son a scholar.” “ Jack is with me, and a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can.”

During his school-days John Wesley was desired to

call upon the famous or infamous Sacheverell, who was under obligation to the Epworth Rector. "I found him alone," said Mr. Wesley long afterwards, "as tall as a Maypole and as fine as an archbishop. I was a very little fellow, not taller (pointing to a very gentlemanlike but very dwarfish clergyman who was in the company) than Mr. Kennedy there. He said, 'You are too young to go to the University; you cannot know Greek and Latin yet. Go back to school.' I looked at him as David looked at Goliath, and despised him in my heart. I thought, 'If I do not know Greek and Latin better than you, I ought to go back to school indeed.' I left him, and neither entreaties nor commands could have again brought me back to him."

This reveals the independence of the boy; he required to be sturdy and hard to effect the labour that God intended that he should accomplish.

But during his school-life he did not make the religious progress of which his early life gave promise. "John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint and left it a sinner," says Tyerman; and Mr. Wesley himself says of this period of his life, "Outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures and said my prayers morning and evening, and what I now hoped to be

saved by was: (1) not being so bad as other people; (2) having still a kindness for religion; and (3) reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers."

Upon this statement Mr. Telford remarks, "We must not forget how sensitive his conscience was. A schoolboy who read his Bible morning and evening had not gone far astray." In June 1720, a week after his seventeenth birthday, Wesley went up to Oxford.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAN WHO TOOK LEAVE OF LEISURE.

“This triumph intellect has over death,
Our words yet live on others’ lips ; our thoughts
Actuate others. Can that man be dead
Whose spiritual influence is upon his kind ?
He lives in glory ; and such speaking dust
Has more of life than half its breathing moulds.”

—L. E. LONDON.

“It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible.”—DR. JOHNSON.

1720-1735.

“HOOKS IN HIS MIND”—THANKING GOD FOR ALL THINGS—
GROPING AFTER TRUTH—THE MAN WHO WAS NEVER TIRED
—WESLEY’S FIRST CONVERT—EVERY MAN’S HAND AGAINST
HIM—HIS LONG HAIR—MISS B.—THE HOLY CLUB—“ALL THE
TALENTS.”

“THERE are strong powers in his mind. He has not indeed many hooks, but with what hooks he has he grapples very forcibly,” said Johnson, speaking of Baretti. Wesley had a mind that was well furnished with hooks, and he grappled both men and learning most tenaciously. This was seen during his college days, when the future leader of a national movement became the centre of a band of earnest seekers after truth.

He was entered at Christchurch, the college that Wolsey had intended should immortalise his name. Here Wesley steadily advanced in knowledge, and, as was fitting, he displayed the wit and love of fun that are natural to every healthy young life. He also read devout books as a matter of duty, and he attended prayers; but he says himself, "I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually, and for the most part very contentedly, in some or other known sin; though with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after the Holy Communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year. I cannot well tell what I hoped to be saved by now, when I was continually sinning against this little light I had, unless by those transient fits of what many divines taught me to call repentance."

An interview that he had with the porter of his college made a lasting impression on Wesley's mind. Wesley told this man to go home and get another coat. "This is the only coat I have in the world, and I thank God for it," replied the man. "Go home and get your supper," said Wesley. The man rejoined, "I have had nothing to-day but a drink of water, and I thank God for it." Wesley had one question more; he asked, "It is late, and you will be locked out, and then what will you have to thank God for?" The man was equal to the test. He said, "I will thank Him that I have the dry stones to lie upon."

"John," said Wesley, "you thank God when you

have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and nothing to lie upon. What else do you thank Him for?"

"I thank Him," responded the man, "that He has given me my life and being, and a heart to love Him and a desire to serve Him."

The reading of that wonderful book, "*Thomas à Kempis*," was of much help to Wesley, as indeed it has been to many earnest souls. It taught Wesley that true religion is a matter of the heart; and while its asceticism vexed him, the book was of solid comfort and help in his then perplexity.

Jeremy Taylor's "*Holy Living and Dying*" was also of great help to the young man, who was "groping after two of the great doctrines which afterwards distinguished his ministry—God's love to all, and the privilege of living in a state of conscious salvation."

Both books were instrumental in forming his opinions, and they together aided him in his endeavour to be right with God.

During this period of uncertainty and doubt, he was in such feeble health that he could only assuage the bleeding of his nose by leaping into a river. Yet long afterwards, at the age of eighty-three, he could say, "I am a wonder to myself; it is now twelve years since I felt any sensation of weariness. I am never tired (such is the goodness of God) either with writing, preaching, or travelling. One natural cause undoubtedly is my continual exercise and change of air."

He himself explains this change in his health thus:

“In consequence of reading Dr. Cheyne [Book of Health and Long Life], I chose to eat sparingly and drink water. This was another great means of continuing my health till I was about twenty-seven. I then began spitting of blood, which continued several years. A warm climate cured that. I was afterwards brought to the brink of death by a fever; but it left me healthier than before. Eleven years after I was in the third stage of a consumption; in three months after it pleased God to remove this also. Since that time I have known neither pain nor sickness, and am now healthier than I was forty years ago! This hath God wrought.”

Beside weak health, Wesley was troubled with want of money. He had but an allowance of £40 per year from the Charterhouse, and humorously tells his mother, that whereas a friend of his had been robbed of both his cap and wig while standing at the door of a coffee-house, “I am pretty safe from such gentlemen, for unless they carry me away carcase and all, they would have a poor purchase.”

Yet, weak in health and poor as he was, Wesley began to consider the advisability of entering the ministry. While he was preparing for ordination he won his first convert. This young man went with Wesley to see the funeral of a young lady of their acquaintance. The two friends waited in St. Mary's Church, and there Wesley entreated his friend to become wholly a Christian. It is pleasing to know that

the few words then spoken were blessed to save a soul from death. There is no more holy exercise than for each soul to seek to share its light and comfort with some other ; this indeed is the teaching of the parable of the leaven.

On 22nd September 1728 Wesley fully assumed the sacred office of the Christian ministry, and most significantly he was then asked by his examiner, "Do you know what you are about? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a Christian priest ought to know that, whether his hand be against every man or no, he must expect every man's hand should be against him."

The Bishop gave to Wesley a no less memorable piece of advice. He said, "If you desire to be extensively useful, do not spend your time and strength in contending for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open notorious vice and in promoting real essential holiness."

Both counsels deserve to be extensively known, for they are indeed wise sayings.

On the 16th of October 1725 Wesley preached his first sermon in the village of South Leigh, near Witney, and on the 17th of March 1726 he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College. He was extremely pleased with the society to which he was now introduced. The financial troubles that had hitherto disturbed him were now at an end, although he still wore his hair long in order to save expense. His

mother urged him to have it cut, but Wesley refused to incur the expense. "As to my looks, it would doubtless mend my complexion to have it all off," he said to his brother Samuel. The letter in which this occurs ends with the remarkable sentence: "LEISURE AND I HAVE TAKEN LEAVE OF ONE ANOTHER. I PROPOSE TO BE BUSY AS LONG AS I LIVE, if my health is so long indulged me."

During the summer of this year (1726) he visited Epworth, and assisted his father in his duties. On the 21st of October 1726 he returned to Oxford, and on the 6th of the following month he was chosen Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes.

At the commencement of the following year he informed his mother that he had "perfectly come over to her opinion that there are many truths it is not worth while to know. If we had a dozen centuries of life allowed us, we might perhaps be pardoned for spending a little time upon such curious trifles; but with the small pittance of life we have, it would be great ill-husbandry to spend a considerable part of it in what makes neither a quick nor a sure return."

In a letter which was sent to Wesley by one of his friends about this period the writer alludes to an attachment that Wesley had formed for the writer's sister, apparently to the lady's satisfaction, for her brother observes: "You have often been in the thoughts of M. B. [Miss Betty], which I have curiously observed when with her alone by inward

smiles and sighs, and abrupt expressions concerning you." The writer's own wishes are seen in the concluding sentence of his letter: "I subscribe myself your most affectionate friend—and *brother* I wish I might write."

From Lincoln College he removed to Christchurch, and that mainly on account of his desire to be fully religious. Law's "Serious Call" had been helpful in convincing him of his sin, but it had not led him to Christ crucified.

About the year 1728 Wesley began the practice of early rising, which he continued during the remainder of his life. He found out that by rising earlier in the morning he was able to sleep all through the night. Even when sixty years of age, he still was able to rise at four o'clock in the morning.

On the 4th of August 1727 he left Oxford, and then he went to assist his father, who held a small living at Wroote, near Epworth. This position he held for two years.

His brother Samuel describes the parsonage-house as roofed with thatch, and lively with the wrangle of "kittens and whelps, pigs and porkets, bellowing kine and bleating lambs, quacking ducks and fluttering hens." The population was under three hundred, and as ignorant and obstinate as any in England. Every man must learn to adequately estimate the full difficulties of his position, and it is sometimes well to begin a military life by leading a forlorn hope.

If there be an escape, then the character is hardened into useable vigorous virtue.

On the 22nd of November 1729 Wesley left this uncongenial sphere and came to Oxford, where a few earnest souls had banded themselves together for mutual aid in the divine life. The two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, William Morgan, and Robert Kirkham were the first "Methodists," or "The Holy Club," as they were termed in ridicule.

For some time these friends contented themselves with mutual exhortation and assistance; but on the 24th August 1730, Mr. Morgan, one of their number, visited the gaol and spoke to the prisoners. He was convinced that an opportunity for useful service had now arisen. The four friends united in this work, and Wesley wrote home asking his father's opinion as to whether he had taken the right path. His father replied, "I have the highest reason to bless God that He has given me two sons together at Oxford to whom He has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them. Go on, then, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you!"

These labours were continued in spite of ridicule, and with singular success. The Bishop's chaplain formed a very high estimate of John Wesley; he said that the young gownsmen "would one day be a standard-bearer of the Cross, either in his own country or beyond the seas."

One example of the devotion of the Methodists is given by John Wesley himself. One day a poor girl whom the Methodists maintained at school called upon him in a half-frozen state. "You seem half-starved," said Wesley to her. "Have you nothing to wear but that linen gown?" "Sir, this is all I have," was the reply. Wesley found that he had no money, and he looked with regret upon the pictures that covered his walls. "It struck me," he says, "will thy Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful steward? Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold.' O justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?"

A most remarkable man joined the Methodists about this time; he was named George Whitfield, and was the son of an innkeeper at Gloucester; he had come up to study for the ministry. Whitfield's account of his introduction to John Wesley is as follows: "I sent a poor apple-woman of our college to inform him that a poor woman had attempted suicide, with a request that he would visit her, but not to discover who I was. She went, but, contrary to my orders, told my name. He having heard of my coming to the Castle, and to the parish church sacrament, and having met me frequently walking by myself, followed the woman when she went away, and sent an invitation to me by her to come to breakfast with him the next morning. My soul was at that time athirst for some spiritual friends. He soon discovered it, and put into my hands Professor Franke's

‘Treatise against the Fear of Men’ and ‘The Country Parson’s Advice to his Parishioners.’ In a short time he let me have another, ‘The Life of God in the Soul of Man.’ I never knew what true religion was till God sent me that excellent treatise. God showed me that true religion was union of the soul with God and Christ formed within us. Not till then did I know that I must be a new creature. Like the woman of Samaria, I wrote letters to my relations telling them there was such a thing as a *new birth*; they thought I was going beside myself.”

It cannot be forgotten that Whitfield shared with Wesley the honour of originating the Great Revival; it is probable that no such pulpit orator as Whitfield has ever arisen, or has ever been used by God for the conversion of sinners. There is no need to disparage Whitfield in order to magnify Wesley; they were peerless men, who were born with distinct but related life-missions. A Ministry that once governed these realms was called “All the Talents.” That is what the world requires. Whitfield, Wesley, and many others were required in the great work of God, and no single life can be dispensed with in the high and solemn service of God. The minute efforts of many workers tell more in their aggregate effect than the spasmodic and more conspicuous labours of the few chief workers. Herein is the Gospel of Hope to us, for, feeble and unknown as we are, we too are required to secure success, and can be used by God in the realisation of His high purposes.

Wesley had now a severe test; he had come to

one of the turning-points of life, from whence there branched out divergent paths.

His father, worn out by long privation and trouble, had been long declining in health ; it was but too evident to all that his days on earth were numbered. It was the Rector's wish that John should apply for the living at Epworth, and thus keep the family home where it had been for forty years. Had Wesley consented, he would probably have accomplished a great work in Lincolnshire, but his efforts would have been local and on a small scale. He himself felt that "if he could stand his ground at Oxford, and approve himself there a faithful minister of Christ through evil report and good report, there was no place under heaven where he was so likely to make improvement in every good work." Wesley's brother, Samuel, urged that John would be better off at Epworth, because at Oxford he was despised. To this his brother made answer that "a Christian will be despised anywhere, and no one is a Christian till he is despised. My being despised will not hinder my doing good, but much further it by making me a better Christian. Another can supply my place at Epworth better than at Oxford, and the good done here is of a far more diffusive nature, inasmuch as it is a more extensive benefit to sweeten the fountain than to do the same to particular streams." The result shows that his choice was a wise one.

Samuel Wesley, the Rector of Epworth, died on the 25th of April 1735. Before he died his Commentary on Job had been printed, and thus he had the satis-

faction, that few men have, of leaving his work on earth finished. To his son John the dying man said, "The inward witness, son, the inward witness; this is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity." To Charles he said, "The weaker I am in body, the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God."

"Are you in much pain?" asked John.

"God does chasten me with pain," said the Rector with a smile; "yea, all my bones with strong pain. But I thank Him for all; I bless Him for all; yea, I love Him for all."

With prophetic foresight, he laid his hands upon the head of Charles and said, "Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not."

"Do not be concerned at my death," he said to one of his daughters. "God will then begin to manifest Himself to my family."

"Think of heaven, talk of heaven; all the time is lost when we are not thinking of heaven."

"As he lived, so he died, in the true Catholic faith of the Holy Trinity in unity, and that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, and the only Saviour of mankind," is the testimony upon his tombstone. "Come, see this wonderful sight, the face of a man who has seen Christ," said a German poet. The Wesleys looked upon this great sight on the 25th of April 1735, and of course with sorrow. May they say this who shall look upon our features after our decease!

CHAPTER IV.

FAITHFUL, BUT REJECTED; OR, THE DISCIPLINE OF FAILURE.

“ Be, then, for all things right a voice uplift
In fearless utterance ;
A power the tangled skein of truth to sift,
And measure life’s advance ;
A fire of hope set in the Time’s wild drift,
Whereto the hopeless glance.”—W. J. DAWSON.

“ Try to frequent the company of your betters. In books and in life frequent that which is the most wholesome society ; learn to admire rightly. Note what great men have admired : they admire great things ; narrow spirits admire basely and worship meanly.”—THACKERAY.

1735—1738.

LEAVES ENGLAND—NOT AFRAID TO DIE—PREACHING AGAINST
DRESS — ALMOST MARRIED — A NARROW ESCAPE — PERSE-
CUTED—HOME AGAIN—THE FAITH OF A SERVANT AND THE
FAITH OF A SON.

AFTER the death of the Rector of Epworth the Wesley family was scattered. The two brothers John and Charles came to London, and there they were the guests of James Hutton, who kept a boarding-school. There was a field of service awaiting both John and Charles

Wesley, but it lay across the Atlantic. Although before the days of the heroic Howard, a General Oglethorpe, with others, had interested themselves in the sufferings of poor debtors. They had obtained the release of many, and having secured a grant of land in America from George II., after whom they named the new colony Georgia, they proposed to transport the debtors thither, and in a new land start them afresh in life. The Wesleys were urged to undertake a mission to this colony of poor emigrants, and they considered the proposal. Their mother heartily approved of the design, and nobly said, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice if they were so well employed."

The two brothers therefore decided upon the attempt, much to the amusement of some of their worldly friends. One of these wiseacres said to John, "What is this, sir? Are you one of the knights-errant? How, pray, got Quixotism into your head? You want nothing; you have a good provision for life, and are in a way of preferment; and must you leave all to fight wind-mills—to convert savages in America?"

"Sir, if the Bible be not true," replied Wesley, "I am as very a fool and madman as you can conceive; but if it is of God, I am sober-minded; for He has declared there is no man that hath left home or parents or brethren for the kingdom of God's sake who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Matt. xix. 29).

Charles Wesley accepted the post of secretary to General Oglethorpe, the governor, and his brother John received a grant of £50 per year from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. On the 14th October 1735 both brothers embarked at Gravesend.

John Wesley, in a letter dated ten days before they were on board, wrote thus about his reasons for undertaking the mission: "My chief motive is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel by preaching it to the heathen. I cannot hope to attain the same degree of holiness here which I may there."

The vessel was detained both at Gravesend and at Cowes, and the voyage, thus inauspiciously begun, was a stormy one. But some Moravian Brethren who were on board amazed Wesley by their calmness in danger. The ship was in the midst of a terrible tempest, but the Moravians were tranquil.

"Were you not afraid?" Wesley asked one of them.

"I thank God, no," he replied.

"But were not your women and children afraid?"

"No; our women and children are not afraid to die."

This was a new revelation to Wesley, and he pondered it anxiously. On the 6th of February 1736 the emigrants landed upon American soil. The brothers then separated: Charles went to lay out the town of Frederica, and John started for Savannah. At the

latter place he met with a Moravian pastor, Spangenberg by name.

“Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?” asked Spangenberg.

Wesley was surprised at the question, and knew not what to answer. Spangenberg asked him, “Do you know Jesus Christ?”

“I know He is the Saviour of the world,” was Wesley’s reply.

“Do you know that He has saved *you*?” asked this faithful counsellor.

“I hope that He has died to save me.”

“Do you yourself *know*?” continued Spangenberg.

“I do,” answered Wesley. “I fear they were mere words,” he added subsequently.

Wesley was above all things practical, and although, as we have seen, he was as yet uncertain as to his creed, he could not remain idle.

On the 7th of March he preached his first sermon in Savannah, and as he believed that his congregation were over-dressed, he preached upon that sin. This sermon made an immense improvement in the dress of his congregation. An instance of his devotion and tact is given when we learn that, when boys who attended the mission-school objected to some of their fellow-scholars because they were shoeless, Wesley himself took charge of the school, and walked to the house barefoot. This cured the complaining scholars of their contempt for their poorer companions.

So far things had been peaceful and successful, but a long course of prosperity was never granted to any work or worker, however worthy and good.

Charles Wesley was persecuted, and he left the colony. Then, after a time, his brother experienced the same stern discipline. All the prophets have been in turn rejected, and it was needful that Wesley should learn by actual conflict the strength of the forces that were arrayed against him before he confronted them in Britain. The drill of failure is essential to victory, and no soldier is worthy of his Master who has not been taught by what is really a victory, because it lessens pride and self-confidence.

In Wesley's case there were circumstances of peculiar pain. Miss Sophia Hopkey, a young, beautiful, and accomplished lady, the niece of Mr. Causton, the chief magistrate of Savannah, had called upon him soon after his arrival. Wesley was interested in her, and his interest might perhaps have ripened into love. One of Wesley's friends penetrated the lady's design, and mistrusting her for some reason or another, spoke to Wesley upon the matter. Wesley might perhaps have married Miss Hopkey, but after his friend's warning he took advice, for he consulted the elders of the Moravian Church as to what he should do.

"We have considered your case," said the Moravian Bishop. "Will you abide by our decision?"

"I will," said Wesley, after some natural hesitation.

"Then we advise you to proceed no further in the matter," said the Bishop.

"The will of the Lord be done," replied Wesley, and decided to remain unmarried.

"I was pierced through as with a sword," said Wesley nearly fifty years afterwards.

The lady's affections were not equally strong, for she speedily married a young man of substance named Williamson. Her subsequent conduct showed that Wesley had a narrow escape, but it was at the cost of much suffering upon his part.

It is only what perhaps we might expect, that when the lady was married she felt resentful to her lost lover. John Wesley, six months after her wedding, repelled her from Communion in consequence of what he believed to be inconsistent behaviour on her part. Her relatives naturally resented this exercise of discipline, and they even lodged a civil action against Wesley. A majority of the jury returned true bills against him, and would not permit Wesley to justify himself. In fact, Mrs. Williamson's relatives were determined to persecute Wesley as an act of revenge for his rejection of her. This vulgar violence convinced Wesley and his friends that no other course was open to him but to leave the colony. This was what his enemies desired, but, with petty malice, they verbally forbade his doing so. Wesley was not the man to be deterred from what he believed to be the path of duty, and he posted up a notice in the public

square announcing his intention of leaving for England. There, at least, he would be certain of a lawful hearing.

On the 2nd of December 1737 he left Savannah, and after many perils he landed at Deal on the 7th of February 1738.

He was still a High Churchman, but he was an earnest seeker after truth. On Sunday, 8th January, he was clearly convinced of his unbelief; that is, as he explains it, of "having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart being troubled."

"I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. I went to America to convert the Indians, but who shall convert me?"

"It was now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity," he wrote in his journal. "But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all suspected), that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

It is only fair to record the fact that in subsequent years John Wesley himself doubted the truth of this assertion. "I had even then the faith of a *servant*, though not that of a *son*," he said.

At any rate, if he were not an evangelical Christian, he was an earnest seeker after light and truth. With

all his High Church notions, it is difficult not to believe that he had faith, although he had not the enjoyment of faith. After all, it is the faith that saves, although it is the comfort of faith that imparts rest to the believer. It is well not only to be snatched from the angry waves, but also to rejoice in the fact that we are safe on solid land once more.

John Wesley had been baulked and hindered in his work, but after all it had not been a failure. He had rendered good and faithful service, and Whitfield, who followed him, bore this pleasing testimony to his friend's solid work, and this alone is sufficient to show that Wesley, even if he were unwise in some things, was ill-used in Georgia. "The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible," says Whitfield. "His name is very precious among the people, and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. Oh, that I may follow him as he followed Christ!"

It is pleasing to record the fact that the trustees of the colony removed Causton from the office that he had abused, which was in itself an exoneration of Wesley.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUNRISE OF DARKEST ENGLAND.

“Oh, my iniquity crimson hath been,
Infinite, infinite, sin upon sin ;
Sin of not loving Thee, sin of not trusting Thee,
Infinite sin !”—BONAR.

“In some there lies a sorrow too profound
To find a voice, or to reveal itself
Throughout the strain of daily toil or thought.”
—WOOLNER.

“If there is one thing upon this earth I love and admire better than another, it is a man who dare look the devil in the face and tell him he is a devil.”—GARFIELD.

1738.

THE ASS AND THE PAIL — MORE LIGHT TO COME — PUTTING
AWAY DISPUTINGS — THE BUSH PREACHER — CONTEMPT —
TWADDLERS—SURPRISING STUPIDITY.

THERE is an old fable that once upon a time a man stood admiring the image of the moon that appeared in his pail of water. But to his annoyance and anger an ass drank up the water, and the likeness of the moon disappeared. Whereupon the man lamented sorely, because he fancied that he had lost the moon ! Which thing may be a parable of the experience both

of men and of nations. Our forms of enjoyment vary, and truth ceases to be evident, and we suppose some ass of trouble or sin hath devoured that which we loved; yet God remains, and can give us back what we have lost.

And nations sometimes so much admire the reflection that they forget the original; hence the asses of infidelity and unbelief must remind them that all truth is not ours, and we only possess its image or reflection.

Good men have often bewailed that truth had left the earth, and in Wesley's early days it seemed as if it were so. Prophetic souls, however, saw that a bright day was coming, but it was long to wait for its dawning, and men died in the dark chill night before it came.

The history of Christianity has been one of new departures; it constantly outgrows its dress and it assumes new attire. It is because, like the manna of old, it may be to the varying ages as their needs may be, and also because, if it were otherwise, we might worship the envelope and forget the living, acting, loving Christ, who acts behind and through it all.

In Wesley's early days infidelity was rampant, and Christianity was not supposed to be capable of apology. Butler says, "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an

agreed point among all people of discernment ; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, by way of reprisal for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Humanly speaking, the Great Revival saved Christianity from extinction ; and while it introduced new forms of Christian effort, they were such as naturally grafted themselves upon the old stock and blossomed by the life-sap of the stem.

In every age we have need to remember the old pilgrim father's advice ; " he bade us to remember that God had more light and truth to break forth from His Word."

This was not the attitude of the religious world in Wesley's day ; the new preachers were almost everywhere assailed with abuse, more or less refined or violent.

As yet Wesley was not fully equipped for the great work which was awaiting him. The magnitude of the work may be seen from the awful facts that were brought out by the House of Lords' inquiry into the "notorious immorality and profaneness." It was then stated that a company of youths had formed themselves into a club which they called *The Blasters' Club*. They professed themselves votaries of the devil, and offered prayers in his name. "Of late years," the report said, "there had appeared a greater neglect of religion and of all things sacred ; a greater neglect of divine worship, both public and private, and of the

due observance of the Sabbath than had ever before been known in England."

The time for Wesley's call to the stupendous work had now arrived. On the 3rd of February 1738 he reached London, and there he met with Peter Böhler.

At this time Tyerman considers that Wesley was almost a Christian. He was scrupulous in his conduct, not only to abstain from what he believed wrong, but he was most diligent in the pursuit of what he had been taught was right. "He was fighting with sin continually, but not always conquering. Before he had *willingly* served sin; now it was *unwillingly*, but still he served it. He fell and rose, and fell again" (Tyerman). "On Friday, February 17th," says Wesley himself, "I set out for Oxford with Peter Böhler. All this time I conversed much with him, but I understood him not; and least of all when he said, 'My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away.'"

Böhler himself thus relates his opinion of the brothers Wesley: "I travelled with the two brothers John and Charles Wesley from London to Oxford. The elder, John, is a good-natured man; he knew he did not properly believe in the Saviour, and was willing to be taught. His brother, with whom you [Count Zinzendorf] often conversed a year ago, is at present very much distressed in his mind, but does not know how he shall begin to be acquainted with the Saviour. Our mode of believing in the Saviour

is so easy to Englishmen that they cannot reconcile themselves to it; if it were a little more artful, they would much sooner find their way into it."

Wesley remained in Oxford for two days, and on the Sunday he preached to the prisoners in the Castle. Ten days later we find him at Salisbury with his mother. From Salisbury he was about to start for Tiverton, in order to visit his eldest brother, Samuel, when tidings reached him of his brother Charles's serious illness. John Wesley at once started for Oxford, but when he reached that city, Charles was better. At Oxford he once more met with Böhler, and he says, "By him, in the hand of the great God, I was on Sunday, the 5th of March 1738, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." Overwhelmed with a sense of his own ill-desert, Wesley felt himself unable and unwilling to preach. But his friend advised him not to yield to the disinclination. He said, "Preach faith till you have it, and then because you have it you will preach faith."

Wesley followed this counsel, and in Oxford Castle he offered salvation by faith to a man who lay there under sentence of death. Moved by compassion for this man, Wesley and the friend who accompanied him, after using several forms of prayer, felt themselves constrained to pray without the Liturgy. When they rose from their knees the man said, "I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins, and

there is no more condemnation for me." Soon after this interview the criminal died in perfect peace.

Hitherto Wesley had invariably confined himself to forms of prayer; from this time he altered his practice. "Neither do I purpose to be confined to them [forms of prayers] any more," he said, "but to pray indifferently with a form or without, as I may find suitable to different occasions."

Wesley's religious difficulties only slowly melted away. He did not as yet believe that conversion could be instantaneous. A careful study of the Scriptures showed him that in the days of the Apostles it was so, but he was then hindered by a fear lest no such miracles were wrought since their age. The clear testimony of credible witnesses removed this objection. "Here ended my disputings," he said; "I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help Thou my unbelief.'"

His brother Charles was as yet unconvinced, and much offended at this new notion of John's. "We sang," says Charles in his journal, "and fell into a dispute whether conversion was gradual or instantaneous. My brother was very positive for the latter and very striking, mentioning some late instances of gross sinners believing in a moment. I was much offended at his worse than unedifying discourse. Mrs. Delamotte left us abruptly. I stayed and insisted a man need not know when first he had faith. His obstinacy in favouring the contrary opinion drove me at last out of the room."

John adds to the account of this memorable conversation the words, "And indeed it did please God then to kindle a fire which I trust shall never be extinguished."

On the 1st of May 1738, Charles, who was sick, found peace through faith in Christ, and so he outstripped his brother.

His elder brother, John, had still three weeks of darkness and doubt before he too was at rest in Christ. It was not until Wednesday, the 24th May 1738, that John Wesley for the first time fully realised what Christ can be to a soul that wholly trusts in Him. As in every case of sound Scriptural conversion, the New Testament was powerful in leading his soul into light and peace. Wesley opened his Testament, and his eye lighted upon these words: "There are given great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." On leaving home he opened on the text, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon he went to St. Paul's Cathedral, where the anthem was full of comfort to him. It was—"Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord! . . . O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He shall redeem Israel from all his sins."

In the evening he went most reluctantly to a meeting of religious persons that was held in Aldersgate Street. Here one read the preface to Luther's Com-

mentary on the Epistle to the Romans. The vigorous evangelical teaching of the great German reformer, in which he explains what faith is in itself and its office in justification, went to Wesley's heart. "By faith the heart is cheered, elevated, excited, and transported with sweet affections toward God." During the reading of this powerful exposition Wesley says, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and then I testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart." Says Charles: "Towards ten my brother was brought in in triumph by a troop of our friends, and declared, '*I believe!*' We sang a hymn with great joy. We devoutly say, 'To God alone be immortal praise!'"

Some of Wesley's friends were greatly scandalised by this avowal of his faith in Christ.

"If you have not been a Christian ever since I knew you, you have been a great hypocrite; for you made us all believe that you were one," said one of these objectors.

"When we renounce everything but faith and get into Christ, then, and not till then, have we any reason to believe that we are Christians," replied Wesley.

Philip Doddridge, under the date of 10th September 1737, thus writes, and it is interesting to record his opinion of Mr. Wesley. With characteristic timidity

he omits Wesley's name from the entry, which reads as follows: "I had this day the great pleasure of beginning an acquaintance with Mr. —, a clergyman of the Church of England, in whom I think I saw as much of God as in any person that in the whole period of my life I have ever known. He told me that God was beginning His work not only at Oxford, where it was much advanced, but likewise in many other parts; and indeed, expressed such a sense of Divine things in his own heart, such dependence upon the Spirit, such deep and experimental religion, that it was almost unparalleled. We both prayed with our friends before we parted; and I must say that I hardly know any conversation or any occurrence that has brought my soul nearer to God, or has made me more fit for my everlasting rest. . . . He added some remarkable circumstances of his own story, of the wonderful manner in which God had inclined his heart to undertake this work among the Americans, in which I verily believe God will make him an apostle, and may the blessing of God go along with him."

The ten years of wandering in the desert had ended at last, and John Wesley had found the promised land that he had sought so long—ten weary years of heart-sickness and seeking, and now at last he had found what he wanted. There had been much needless suffering and darkness. Instead of walking along the park-like avenue to the palace in which joy awaited him, he had climbed the park palings, rent his

garments, and risked a thrust from a stag's horn, and then he had to come back to the gate at last. All human merit, endeavour, and suffering must end in trusting Christ; it is wise to begin at once by faith in His atonement, and thus to avoid the needless suffering those incur who seek to save themselves.

Part of the penalty of Wesley's long enslavement to forms was that the day after his conversion "the enemy injected a fear" that he had deceived himself. The day following this temptation his "soul continued in peace, but yet in heaviness because of manifold temptations." On the 31st of May, Wesley says that he "grieved the Spirit of God not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness instead of tender love of one who was not sound in the faith. Immediately God hid His face, and I was troubled and in heaviness until the next morning."

On the 11th of June, Wesley preached his celebrated sermon before the University at St. Mary's Church in Oxford. The text was, "By grace are ye saved through faith." This sermon was published in the following November.

In this sermon Wesley explains salvation as consisting of three things—deliverance from the guilt of past sin, from servile fear, and from the dominion of evil. He thus defines faith. "It is a full reliance on the blood of Christ—a trust in the merits of His life, death, and resurrection—a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life; as given for us and

living in us, and in consequence hereof, a closing with Him and cleaving to Him as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, or, in one word, our salvation."

After preaching this sermon, John Wesley started for Germany in order to visit the Moravian Brethren, for whom he had conceived a strong affection.

On the 1st of August he reached Herrnhut, as the Moravian settlement was called. "We have called this place Herrnhut, to remind us, on the one hand, that the Lord is our protector and keeper," said one of the Moravian leaders, "and, on the other, that it is our duty to stand on the watch-tower and keep ward."

The name Herrnhut signifies the defence of God, and also the watch of the Lord.

Until the 12th of August Wesley remained with these simple, earnest disciples, deriving especial profit from the instruction of Christian David. This man, who had been trained as a carpenter, was one of those great souls that from time to time appear as if to astonish men. He had served as a soldier, and had taught himself to write from his Bible, and after a style of penmanship of his own invention. Christian David possessed a marvellous insight into the doctrines of the Scripture and peculiar fervour in explaining them. Intercourse with this man (the "bush preacher," as the Papists called him), and with Count Zinzendorf, confirmed Wesley's opinions and kindled them into fervour.

At the same time, truth compels us to acknowledge that Tyerman is accurate when he states, "That while Wesley heard much among the Moravians that was Scriptural, he also heard much that was otherwise, and paid more attention to their experiences both in England and in Germany than was desirable or for his good. His high opinion of the people's piety made it easy to believe even many of their foolish statements."

The same writer caustically remarks, that upon Wesley's return to England from Germany, "he still retained his High Church nonsense. This was pitiable folly, perhaps not to be wondered at, yet deserving to be despised."

On the 16th of September 1738, Wesley reached London, after three months' absence. He and his brother immediately commenced preaching, and with much comfort and success. Their doctrine, of course, aroused opposition, and, in consequence of the misrepresentation of their enemies, they were summoned before Dr. Gibson, the Bishop of London. Their answers to his questions satisfied his Lordship, and he dismissed them with a promise that he would in future believe nothing against them except upon the testimony of two or three witnesses. He added, "You may have access to me at all times."

Tyerman quotes from Warburton's *Life* a letter in which the future Bishop, who was then Vicar of Brand Broughton, thus writes: "What think you of our new

set of fanatics, called the Methodists? There is one Wesley, who told a friend of mine that he had lived most deliciously last summer in Georgia, sleeping under trees and feeding on boiled maize, sauced with the ashes of oak leaves; and that he will return thither, and then will cast off his English dress and wear a dried skin like the savages, the better to ingratiate himself with them." In another letter Warburton is still more scurrilous and disgusting. He says, "A couple of these Methodists, of whom Wesley was one, travelling into this neighbourhood on foot, took up their lodging with a clergyman of their acquaintance. The master of the house going into their chamber in the morning to salute them, perceived a certain vessel full of blood, and on asking the occasion, was told that it was *their method* when the blood grew rebellious to draw it off by breathing a vein; that they had been heated with travel, and thought it proper to cool themselves!"

The suggestion is disgusting, but it deserves to be recorded in order to account for the bitter opposition with which the preachers of some of the Revival were received. One does not wonder after this that a gentleman should seriously ask if the Methodists were not people who placed religion in wearing long whiskers; or that in Ireland one Roger o' Ferral should place a notice in the public Exchange in which he said that he was ready to head any mob in order to pull down any house that should dare

to harbour a *swaddler*. The name swaddler, Mr. Wesley says, was first given to one of the Methodist preachers "by a Popish priest who heard him speak of a child wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and probably did not know the expression was in the Bible, a book he was not much acquainted with."

One does not wonder at all at Mr. Wesley's fine scorn that now and then breaks forth, as, "I preached at Birmingham, and really admired the exquisite stupidity of the people. They gaped and stared while I was speaking of death and judgment, as if they had never heard of such things before!"

Before this year of 1738 closed most of the pulpits of the Establishment were shut against Wesley and his friends. This did not avail to suppress the rising tide; it forced its way along new channels, and with surprising consequences.

CHAPTER VI.

VENTURES IN NEW SERVICE ; OR, SUBMITTING TO BE VILE FOR TRUTH'S SAKE.

“Champion of the right, patriot or priest, or pleader of the innocent
cause,

Upon whose lips the mystic bee hath dropped the honey of persuasion,
Whose heart and tongue have been touched as of old by the live coal
from the altar !

How wide the spreading of thy peace, how deep the draught of thy
pleasures !

To hold the multitude as one, breathing in measured cadence,

A thousand hearts kindled by thee with consecrated fire,

Ten flaming spiritual hecatombs offered on the mount of God !

Verily, O man, with truth for thy theme, eloquence shall throne thee
with archangels.”—TUPPER.

“When one of God’s great thoughts is throbbing in the heart of one
of His apostles, the same impulse and passion is stirring another, per-
haps others, in reinote and far-away scenes.”—PAXTON HOOD.

1738—1739.

NO NESTLING — WHITE LINES ON BLACK FACES — BIBLE AS A
LOTTERY—SUBMITTING TO BE VILE—NOT ENOUGH GOSPEL
TO SAVE A TOMTIT—THE WORLD IS MY PARISH—GOING OFF
AS A SNUFF—THE PEST OF ENTHUSIASM—THE FIRST METHO-
DIST CHAPEL.

“THERE goes a man who serves God as if the devil
were in him,” said a profane person, pointing to

Darracot, who had been one of Doddridge's students. Of Darracot another enemy said that he looked as if he lived on live things. Both phrases might be applied to the leaders of the Great Revival. They were indefatigable and they were vivacious, and because of both qualities they were heard, followed, and were able to influence Great Britain.

George Whitfield, as we have said, shared with Wesley the honour of originating and leading the great aggressive movement which, humanly speaking, saved Christianity in England from dying of sheer inanition. Whitfield had left for Georgia in order to assist the Wesleys in their work in that colony, but he did not reach America until after they had quitted it. He now came back to England, and found that the great bulk of the beneficed clergy were suspicious, not to say hostile, to the new movement. In Bristol the pulpits were denied him, and in one of the local papers there appeared this announcement, "That the Rev. George Whitfield, who had set the town on fire, was now gone to kindle a flame in the country." Whitfield, whose indefatigable energy was expressed in his motto, "No nestling on this side Jordan," waited on the Chancellor to inquire as to the reason for this exclusion. "Because you have no license," said the Chancellor. Whitfield, finding that this obsolete law was made an excuse for his expulsion, replied, "There is a canon which forbids all clergymen to frequent taverns and to play at cards; pray, why is not that put into execution?" Irritated

at this just retort, the Chancellor replied, "Why does not some one complain of them? I am resolved, sir, if you preach or expound anywhere in this diocese, I will first suspend, and then excommunicate you." "And so," says Whitfield, "we parted."

Thus shut out of the pulpits of England, Whitfield at first thought of returning to America.

"What need to go abroad?" asked his friends. "Have we not Indians enough at home? If you have a mind to convert Indians, there are colliers enough at Kingswood, near Bristol."

It was a daring suggestion, but Whitfield was a daring man when preaching was concerned. He went to Kingswood, and there he preached to about two hundred of these colliers. And with such success, that he went again, and this time ten thousand of these men, who were amongst the most lawless and ignorant in the kingdom, were assembled. They lined the trees and hedges. They had come in their soiled clothes, just as they had left the pit. Says Whitfield, "All was hush; I spoke for an hour, and so loud that all, I was told, could hear. And having no righteousness of their own to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who was a friend to publicans and sinners, and came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The first discovery of their being affected was to see the white gutters made by their tears, which plentifully fell down their black cheeks, as they came out of their coal-pits. Hundreds and hundreds of

them were soon brought under deep convictions, which, as the event proved, happily ended in a sound and thorough conversion."

Something of this surprising success must of course be attributed to the wonderful preacher. Of him Paxton Hood says: "Whitfield was a perfect gentleman, of manners most affectionate and amiable; altogether the most unlikely creature, it seems, to rise triumphant over the execrations of a mighty mob. Again and again we have to remark that the oratory of Whitfield seems to us almost the greatest mystery in the history of eloquence. His voice must have been wonderful; its strength was overwhelming, but it was not a roar; its modulation and inflection were equal to its strength, so that it had the all-commanding tones of a bell in its clearness, and all the modulations of an organ in its variety and sweetness. Read any account of him, and it will be seen that we do not exaggerate in speaking of him as the very Orpheus of the pulpit."

Without a doubt he was a man born for a lofty mission; but the secret of his success lay deeper than in his eloquence. The season of his preaching was really a second Pentecost, when the Divine Spirit glorified Christ through His servant. In venturing into the open air, the Christian ministry had, however, only returned to its first efforts; therein it but copied our Lord; but it would probably have never attempted what was then regarded as a singular innovation had it not been that no other method of reaching the people seemed possible. Two

greens near Bristol were thus honoured by Whitfield, who upon each of them gathered several times a congregation of twenty thousand to hear him preach.

Whitfield, in whose nature no tinge of jealousy or self-seeking can be detected, sent to ask Wesley to come to Bristol. The Wesleys were at that time in the habit of opening the Bible at any difficulty, and regarding the first text upon which their eyes lighted as a revelation from God. John Newton (*Omicron and Vigil*, Letter 28) speaks strongly against this practice, which, unhappily, is not extinct even now. "The Scripture cannot deceive us," he says, "if rightly understood; but it may, if perverted, prove the occasion of confirming us in a mistake. The Word of God is not to be used as a lottery; nor is it designed to instruct us by shreds and scraps, which, detached from their proper places, have no determined import; but it is to furnish us with just principles, right apprehensions, to regulate our judgments and affections, and thereby to influence and direct our conduct." These words are golden, and exhaust all that can be said upon the subject; it would be well if they could be ever kept in mind.

Most fortunately, as the event showed, the lot in Wesley's case decided him to go to Bristol, and on 31st March 1739 he met Whitfield in the Queen of the West. He stood among the crowd that gathered for the open-air preaching, but with conflicting feelings. It was hard to divest himself of his ritualism; but,

on the other hand, Wesley intensely loved the souls of men, and he was willing to do anything in order to save them. With characteristic frankness he says, "I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to the strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he [Whitfield] set me an example on Sunday, having been all my life (until very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church."

It is singular to learn there is but one fixed open-air pulpit in London.

Whitfield left the city, and then, to quote his own expression, Wesley "submitted to be more vile," for he too preached to about three thousand people from a "little eminence in a ground adjoining the city." The first step in such circumstances is the real difficulty. Wesley felt now no hesitation, but he continued outdoor preaching. Tyerman remarks of Wesley, "It was impossible for such a man to be idle; work was essential to his happiness, and almost to his very existence." This is true of all noble souls; the Gospel of Work is a part of their creed. Wesley had his hands full of work; he seemed bent upon verifying his own words, for he certainly had but little leisure. Every morning he read prayers in Newgate, and every evening he preached and expounded to one or another of the various religious Societies that had been formed in Bristol. In the

afternoon of each day he preached either in Bristol or in its vicinity. His preaching was mainly upon those themes that are calculated to rouse the soul and to lead it to simple faith in Christ. It can never be said of Wesley's sermons, as was said by a Bishop of Cork, who remarked upon a sermon that had been preached by his Dean, "It was an admirably arranged and delivered sermon, clever, eloquent, argumentative and illustrative; but it had not in it Gospel enough to save a tomtit!"

Wesley's preaching produced strong effects, mainly because it dealt with strong themes, and interested itself only about the direct interests of the soul. Modern preaching will decline when it forsakes the rousing and soul-saving doctrines that cluster around the Cross, and neglects the vital interests of the soul for the trivialities of custom or of politics.

Some of Wesley's friends, unable to understand the man or the mission for which he had come into the world, urged him to desist from his irregular labours, and either to settle at college or to undertake a parish. Wesley replied finely, "I have no business at college, having now no office and no pupils, and it will be time enough to consider whether I ought to accept a cure of souls when one is offered to me. On Scriptural grounds I do not think it hard to justify what I am doing. God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, and confirm the virtuous. *Man forbids me to do this in*

another's parish ; that is, in effect, not to do it at all, seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom then shall I hear? God or man? If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge ye. I LOOK UPON ALL THE WORLD AS MY PARISH ; THUS FAR, I MEAN, THAT IN WHATEVER PART OF IT I AM, I JUDGE IT MEET, RIGHT, AND MY BOUNDEN DUTY TO DECLARE UNTO ALL THAT ARE WILLING TO HEAR THE GLAD TIDINGS OF SALVATION."

This was the spirit for lack of which the Puritan churches had died out in Ireland, for the Gospel is distinctly aggressive, missionary, and world-wide in its aim and reach. It is a solemn trust, and as such it must be testified to all men, and that in terms wide as the love of Christ, and yet narrow only as is His righteousness. The Revival enlarged men's ideas of the Gospel purpose, but it was not in any sense the consequence of difference of opinion ; it sprang out of a burning passion to save souls. Its spirit was expressed by Whitfield thus : " Oh, to be a flame of fire in the service of my God ! " " I am determined to die fighting, though it be on my stumps. " " Pray that I may not go off as a snuff. I would fain die blazing, not with human glory, but with the love of Jesus. "

The preachers declared truly, that " their sole quarrel was not with Church or State authorities, but with sin and Satan ; and their sole object was not to make proselytes, but to save sinners. "

Yet the Revival preachers encountered fierce opposi-

tion, not only from the rabble, but also from those in authority, and especially from those who were supposed to be inspired with a similar desire to save souls.

For example, Wesley went to preach at Pensford Church, but he was at the last moment excluded from the pulpit because the minister had learned that Wesley was mad. Not to be baffled, Wesley preached in the open air. His enemies sent two men to interrupt the preacher by singing ballads near him.

In Bath itself, Wesley was encountered by Beau Nash, a gamester who was called King of Bath. This rake, wearing an immense white hat, attempted to put the preacher down. But he met with more than his match, and had to retire from the unequal contest.

"Your preaching frightens people out of their wits," said Nash.

"Sir, did you ever hear me preach?"

"No."

"How then can you judge of what you never heard?"

"I judge by common report."

"Common report is not enough. I dare not judge of *you* by common report."

The press teemed with warnings against the new preachers; such as, "Let not such bold movers of sedition and ringleaders of the rabble, to the disgrace of their order, be regularly admitted into those pulpits which they have taken with multitude and with tumult, or as ignominiously by stealth" (*Scots' Magazine*).

The pulpits rang with such invectives as, "The

Methodists are restless deceivers of the people, who make it their daily business to fill the heads of the ignorant and unwary with wild perplexive notions."

Another divine declared that the new preachers, "like Solomon's madmen, cast firebrands, snares, and death; and send to hell (only because they were not of their own frantic persuasion) millions of Christian men much better than themselves." Preaching in the open air, this minister added, is "a reproach not only to our Church and country, but to human nature itself. To the prevalence of immorality and profaneness, infidelity and atheism, is now added the pest of enthusiasm. Our prospect is very sad and melancholy. Go not after these impostors and seducers, but shun them as you would the plague."

The most formidable attack came from the Bishop of London, who in a pastoral letter directly warned his people against the Methodists. He charged them with claiming special inspiration and arrogating to themselves the language and character of Christ. They also attempted to plant a new Gospel, he said, and, in so doing, they disparaged the parochial clergy. This clamour and opposition was only natural; many did not understand the new movement, and with some complaint was, in fact, only a repetition of Demetrius's complaint, "Our craft is in danger" (Acts xix.).

Whitfield replied to this most one-sided document in a temperate and vigorous letter, which effectually silenced his accuser.

Wesley, for his part, had a verbal encounter with the Bishop of Bristol, who roughly told him that he had no business in Bristol, and advised him to go home.

Wesley nobly replied, "My Lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay so long as I think so. At present, I think I can do most good here; therefore here I stay. . . . I conceive not, therefore, that in preaching here by this commission I break any human law. When I am convinced I do, then it will be time to ask shall I obey God or man? But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile that I could advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls in any other place more than in Bristol, in that hour, by God's help, I will go hence: which till then I may not do."

A competent judge thus describes Wesley's manner in the pulpit: "He then preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard any man preach. Though I have heard many a finer sermon, yet I think I never heard any man discover such evident signs of vehement desire to benefit his hearers. With unusual fervour, he acquitted himself as an ambassador for Christ; and although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety that I could not observe anything incoherent through the whole performance" (Joseph Williams).

Many years afterwards (in 1790), the Rev. Joseph Hughes, the founder of the Bible Society, heard Wesley preach for three successive days in Aberdeen. He thus records his opinion: "Much of Dr. Franklin's good sense and pithy manner, but in my view not quite evangelical."

On the 12th of May 1739 the foundation of the first Methodist chapel was laid. It was situated in Broadmead, Bristol. Wesley at first entrusted the enterprise to trustees; but learning his mistake, he took the responsibility and direction upon himself.

Meanwhile there appeared in connection with Wesley's preaching some of those singular exhibitions of religious excitement that have from time to time more or less accompanied all revivals of religion. The first recorded case occurred on the 21st January 1739 in London. While Wesley was preaching, a well-dressed woman of mature years cried out as if in dying agonies. The next day Wesley saw her, and he then learned that some three years before she had been deeply convinced of sin. The clergyman of the parish, to whom she then went for counsel, judged her to be mad, and recommended that she should be treated as such. She was bled and blistered, but of course without finding peace of mind. Wesley prayed with the poor creature, and, after five days of agony, she was enabled to take comfort.

Within a fortnight a similar case occurred at Oxford. Wesley heard of a bitter opponent of Methodists,

and he went and argued with her. She was enraged until Wesley began to pray. The woman immediately ceased from upbraiding Wesley, and fell into a terrible agony of both soul and body. After a time she cried out, "Now I know I am forgiven for Christ's sake."

But it was in Bristol, and chiefly at Society-meetings, that the most remarkable of these scenes occurred. Wesley himself speaks about these convulsions thus:—

"*April 17.*—At Baldwin Street we called on God to confirm His Word. Immediately one that stood by cried out aloud with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death. But we continued in prayer till a new song was put into her mouth, a thanksgiving unto our God. Soon after two other persons were seized with strong pain, and constrained to roar for the disquietude of their heart. But it was not long before they likewise burst forth into praise to God their Saviour. The last who called upon God, as out of the belly of hell, was a stranger in Bristol, and in a short space he also was overwhelmed with glory and love, knowing that God had healed his backslidings.

"*April 21.*—At Weavers' Hall a young man was suddenly seized with a violent trembling all over, and in a few minutes sank to the ground. But we ceased not calling upon God till He raised him up full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

“*April 26.*—At Newgate I was led to pray that God would bear witness to His Word. Immediately one and another and another sunk to the earth; they dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf, and He turned her heaviness into joy. In the evening one was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately His abundant kindness was shown, and she loudly sang of His righteousness.

“*April 30.*—While I was preaching at Newgate a woman broke out into strange cries and tears. Great drops of sweat ran down her face, and all her bones shook; but both her body and soul were healed in a moment.

“*May 1.*—At Baldwin Street my voice could scarce be heard amidst the groanings of some and the cries of others calling aloud to Him that is mighty to save, and ten persons then began to say in faith, ‘My Lord and my God!’ A Quaker who stood by was very angry, and was biting his lips and knitting his brows when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We prayed for him, and he soon lifted up his head with joy and joined us in thanksgiving. A bystander, John Hayden, a weaver, a man of regular life and conversation, one that constantly attended the public prayers and sacrament, and was zealous for the

Church and against Dissenters, laboured to convince the people that all this was a delusion of the devil; but next day, while reading a sermon on justification by faith, he suddenly changed colour, fell off his chair, and began screaming and beating himself against the ground. The neighbours were alarmed and flocked together. When I came in, I found him on the floor, the room being full of people, and two or three of them holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes on me and said, 'Ay, this is he I said deceived the people. But God has overtaken me. I said it was a delusion of the devil, but this is no delusion.' Then he roared aloud, 'O thou devil! thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay in me! Christ will cast thee out! I know this work is begun. Tear me in pieces if thou wilt, but thou canst not hurt me.' He then beat himself against the ground, his breast heaving as if in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty. With a clear, strong voice he cried, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from this time forth for evermore.' I called again an hour after. We found his body weak as that of an infant and his voice lost, but his soul was in peace, full of love, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

Similar convulsions attended John Wesley's preaching in London and afterwards at Newcastle.

Without a doubt in some instances the convulsions were impostures, but in the majority of the cases the physical effects were the direct consequences of an intense realisation of the solemn facts of time and eternity. Telford justly says, "No explanation meets these cases but that which ascribes them to intense conviction of sin."

If it be asked why similar results do not now follow the preaching of the Gospel, it may be answered that such a vivid sense of the guilt of sin in itself, such a realisation of its intense vileness and of the awful penalty annexed to it, is comparatively rare in these days. Religion with many has lost the Bride-look, and hence the rousing doctrines of the Gospel are seldom handled as they were during the Revival.

There may be beneficent conviction of sin that is not so acute ; but as the depth to which the frost penetrates marks the degree of fertility, so the virtue of the after-life is in proportion to the intensity of the preceding conviction of sin.

Whitfield, with others, doubted the reality of these signs ; he even regarded them as tempting God. But after that he had seen similar results attend his own preaching, he was silenced ; and Wesley says, "I trust we shall all suffer God to carry on His own work in the way that pleaseth Him."

In London this year of 1739 was also one of strange incidents and interest.

Some French prophets had strangely imposed upon the Methodists by pretended revelations. When the people had been induced to disown this delusion, Wesley preached in Moorfields (in which Bedlam was then situated) to vast audiences. This much incensed his brother Samuel, who remonstrated with Mrs. Wesley for her countenancing "a spreading delusion so far as to be one of Jack's congregation. For my own part, I had much rather have them picking stones within the walls than preaching in the area of Moorfields." That is, he would rather see his brothers lunatics than open-air preachers.

In November 1739 Samuel Wesley died, and probably learned better in another world. The same month saw another remarkable change in Methodism, which then found an organised centre in the metropolis.

In the City Road, London, there stood a ruin that had been once used as a foundry. An explosion that had occurred here had led to the works being transferred to Woolwich. Wesley preached in the dilapidated building, and at the request of some friends he purchased the ruins.

This foundry, when repaired and enlarged at a total cost, including the purchase-money, of £800, became the City Road Chapel, the cathedral of Methodism.

The first structure was ruinous, with time-eaten timbers, a rough pantile roof, and a pulpit made of a

few rough-hewn boards. It was a meet beginning for what has been justly considered one of the greatest facts in the history of the Church of Christ.

One of the early Methodist heroes, Silas Told (whose life reads like a romance), describes a visit that he paid to the foundry. As Wesley entered the chapel, a whisper ran through the congregation of "Here he comes! here he comes!" Neither the singing nor the prayer pleased Told, but Wesley's sermon enchanted his hearer. "As long as I live I will never part from him," said Silas. He kept his word; and when he died, Wesley thus notes in his journal: "On the 20th of December 1778 I buried what was mortal of honest Silas Told. For many years he attended the malefactors in Newgate without fee or reward; and I suppose no man for this hundred years has been so successful in that melancholy office. God had given him peculiar talents for it, and he had amazing success therein. The greatest part of those whom he attended died in peace, and many of them in the triumph of faith."

Such instances were not rare in early Methodism, and they explain and justify its amazing success. It grew because it was alive with love and tenderness, and it survived because it deserved to continue.

CHAPTER VII.

STEP BY STEP ; OR, SOMETHING AT EVERY TIME.

“Thy enterprise is one that will not brook
Or haste or light equipment, and there lies
Right on the threshold of success a fierce
And fiery ordeal, which thou needs must pass,
Encountering first the darkest powers of Hell,
If thou wouldst win the gracious smile of Heaven.”

—THE TEMPTATION.

“A man may be able to call a broom by twenty names, in Latin, Spanish, Dutch, Greek, &c. ; but my maid who knows the way to use it, but knows it only by one name, is not far behind him.”—JOHN NEWTON.

1739–1743.

CHARLES WESLEY'S WIT—SEPARATION FROM THE MORAVIANS—
THE FIRST METHODIST SOCIETY—A PENNY A WEEK—THE
CLASS-MEETING—IS BIGOTRY DEAD ?—THE TOMBSTONE AS
A PULPIT—A WAGGON-LOAD OF METHODISTS—“FOUR-
O'CLOCK-IN-THE-MORNING COURAGE.”

“ONE thing in your conduct I could never account for ;
I mean, your employing laymen,” said an Archbishop
to Charles Wesley. “My Lord, the fault is yours and
your brethren's,” was the ready reply. “How so ?”
“Because you hold your peace and the stones cry
out.” “But I am told that they are unlearned men.”

"Some are, and so the dumb ass rebukes the prophets," replied Charles Wesley.

This was Charles Wesley's witty method of reproof. He felt, as all do, that Methodism, humanly speaking, owes much of its surprising extension not only to the noble character of its women, but also to the self-devotion of its lay-preachers. Wesley says, "Joseph Humphreys was the first lay-preacher that assisted me in England in the year 1738." In March 1739 John Cennick preached under a sycamore tree at Kingswood, Bristol, and with such success that he forthwith became a regular preacher.

Thomas Maxfield, who had been the subject of strong convulsions in Bristol, was the third of the noble army that have constituted the glory of Methodism. He had been left at the Foundry Chapel in London, with a charge to pray with the members of the Society. Tidings reached Wesley that he had commenced preaching, and at once the leader started for home in haste to check this daring innovation. But his mother, Susannah Wesley, wisely counselled caution. She said, "John, take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him for yourself." Wesley took this sensible advice, and heard Maxfield preach before pronouncing judgment. In the spirit of his own advice in reference to the strange convulsions in Bristol, Wesley could

only say, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth to Him good."

These three men may be placed in the front as the pioneers of the noble army of lay-preachers which have been the strength and pride of Methodism, a form of service which is gradually being introduced into other Churches, and even into the Establishment.

There was need of every assistance in the great work, for now the Revival was threatened, and not for the last time, by internal foes. The Moravians, with whom the new preachers had hitherto worked amicably, now, under the influence of Count Zinzendorf, had adopted most singular notions. They refused to admit that faith had any degrees in it; indeed, they denied the term faith to trust that had any tincture of doubt whatever in it. They inculcated indolence under the term of stillness, and, moreover, attached a foolish importance to dreams, signs, and visions. Then the new departure of employing lay-preachers was another cause of discord. They intensely resented this act.

"No soul *can* be washed in the blood of Christ unless it first be brought to one in whom Christ is fully formed," said the Moravians, adding that there were but two such perfect men, and they, of course, were of their own Church.

On the 20th of July 1740, John Wesley formally protested against the errors of the Moravians and withdrew from fellowship with them.

Twenty-five men and fifty women followed him, and

these, on the 23rd of July 1740, were formed into a Methodist Society. John Wesley gives us the following specimens of the Moravian opinions. One of their preachers said publicly and unrebuked, "As many go to hell by praying as by thieving." Another said, "I knew a man who received a great gift while leaning over a chair; but kneeling down to give God thanks, he lost it immediately through doing so."

Connection with such people could not but immensely retard the new movement, and once free from them the Methodist Society began rapidly to increase. But a more serious danger threatened its very existence, for now the differences of opinion that had long prevailed upon doctrinal points between Wesley and Whitfield, who differed mainly about what, for want of a better term, is called Calvinism, led to an open rupture. The story is a sad one. Difference of opinion there could not but be, but it is a pity that, even if a separation were absolutely needful (which may be well doubted), such excellent Christian men should forget themselves so much as to employ the terms that were freely used on both sides of this controversy.

It is an unlovely story, and it probably did as much harm to the work of God in England as the equally un-Christlike sacramental controversy in Germany did to the Reformation.

It is more pleasant to know that while they differed widely upon the question of Freewill, both the Cal-

vinistic and Methodist sections of the Revivalists were ready to suffer on behalf of the Gospel.

At Bengeworth Charles Wesley was called a "scoundrel and a rascal;" the mob were urged to take him away and duck him; he was roughly seized and his nose wrung by the leader of the rabble. Cennick, who differed from Wesley, was also assailed by a furious mob. A man and woman rode through his congregation lashing them with their whips and trampling them under foot. Dead dogs and dust were hurled at the preacher, who with his helpers were roughly beaten.

On the 22nd October 1741, the first martyr to the new faith sealed his testimony with his blood. His name was William Seward, and he was at the time on a preaching tour through Glamorganshire. The preachers were everywhere ill-treated, and Seward was struck by a missile and blinded. But he still continued his preaching, and said nobly, in speaking of the ill-usage that he received, "Better endure this than hell." At length a villain struck him on the head, and the blow proved to be fatal. Whatever else the Methodists could do, they knew how to suffer, and they could die well.

The Revivalists were now divided into two sections, that, as the Methodists and the Calvinistic Methodists, still remain separate.

Wesley's great care was to consolidate the Societies that held with him, and for this purpose he met with them regularly. "Strengthen you one another. Talk

together as often as you can, and pray earnestly with and for one another," said he; and his advice was taken. Wesley also required them to contribute one penny per week for the needs of the poor.

On the 15th of February 1742 a most important alteration was made in the rules of the Societies, which change came about by an accident.

Some of the Bristol Methodists had met in order to discuss the question of finance. Some one objected that many were too poor to pay the penny per week subscription that was expected from each one. Said Captain Foy, "Put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything, well. I will call on them weekly, and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call upon eleven of your neighbours weekly, receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." "This was done," writes Wesley, "and in a while some of these informed me they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing, the very thing we have wanted so long.'"

With the readiness to learn which is the chief constituent of wisdom, Wesley at once adopted the new plan. His visitors, however, found that in some cases it was very inconvenient for them to call at the homes of those over whom they were placed. It was therefore arranged that once or twice a week the various classes should meet together in the chapel or some convenient place. "It can scarce be conceived

what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation," said Mr. Wesley. "Many now happily experience that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before they began to bear one another's burdens and naturally to care for each other."

"In the peculiar system of Church government commonly known as Methodism," says Wiseman, "class-meetings occupy a conspicuous and most important place. They are bound up inseparably with its entire disciplinary and financial economy. Their existence is assumed in every arrangement for the support of the ministry, the relief of the poor, the supply of various connexional funds, the administration of discipline, and the internal management of church affairs. To discontinue them would be to inflict on that system a paralysing stroke, if not a death-blow."

The same writer thus enumerates the benefits of the class-meeting: "It brings a number of pious persons, members of the same Church, into frequent contact with each other. They know and care for one another. Such a meeting is well suited to the social instincts of our nature; and when properly conducted, cannot fail to develop the social feelings and give them a right and noble direction. . . . The class-meeting affords a most valuable opportunity for supplementing and personally applying the truths and warnings uttered in the pulpit. The same remarks will apply to consolations offered by the minister, but which a trembling

disciple hesitates to take to himself. . . . Those of us who have been brought up in religious families can scarcely realise the pleasure and benefit which the class-meeting affords to persons differently situated. It also imposes on every member a wholesome check, which is sensibly felt in the moment of temptation. Indeed, there are many who profess to derive more advantage from the class-meeting in this way than in any other."

It is interesting for members of differing communities to observe and to learn from the experience of those who differ from them, for without doubt there is much to be learned from the successes and failures, the methods and practices, of each of the Churches. Rowland Hill frequently said, "Mr. Bigotry fell down and broke his leg; would that he had broken his neck." Would that it were indeed so, for a union of all evangelical Christians was never more required than it is in the present age.

Bigotry assailed Wesley all his life through. An instance of its failure is to be seen in the fact that in one parish in Cornwall there occurs this entry: "Item, paid to Mr. So-and-so, 7s. 6d. for driving away the Methodists." Now all the population of this parish, except five families, are Methodists, and there are fourteen Wesleyan chapels in the parish.

This victory, however, was won by dint of persistent patient endurance of wrong and insult. The early days of Methodism are full of strange and sometimes tragical stories.

Thus it is related that five young men met together

in a tavern in order to enjoy themselves. Their sport was to take off Mr. Wesley. One of their number went for a few moments to the chapel in which Mr. Wesley was preaching in order that he might the better mimic the preacher. Wesley gave out his text just as the young man peeped in. It was, "Prepare to meet thy God!" The young man listened, and he stood transfixed until the sermon was ended, and then he returned to his companions.

"Well, now," they cried as he entered the room, "take him off!"

"Ah! gentlemen, he has taken me off," said the man, and then he repeated Wesley's tender appeals. From that night he himself became a sincere Christian, and one of the most successful preachers of the time.

The opposition that Wesley encountered sometimes assumed most brutal forms. The most foul slanders were freely circulated concerning him and his helpers. He was accused of smuggling, treason, and worse offences. The vilest cartoons were circulated, in which he was held up to ridicule, and one regrets to find Hogarth among the lampooners.

John Cennick at Swindon was drenched with water from a fire-engine. At Hampton, near Gloucester, foetid water and hog's-wash were emptied over both the preacher and congregation. At Stratton they were cruelly beaten by a furious crowd, to whom they continued to preach until they were driven off by force.

In spite of all this, in the year 1742 Wesley con-

tinued in desperate earnest his work of itinerancy. He had intended to start for Bristol, but was summoned into Leicestershire in order to visit a dying friend.

On the 26th of May he reached Birstal, where he met with John Nelson. This man, a mason by trade, had found peace through Wesley's first sermon in Moorfields. "My heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me," said Nelson.

Leaving Birstal, Wesley started for the North, and on the 28th of May he reached Newcastle. At that time Newcastle was surrounded with a wall having turrets, towers, and gates. In what is now the centre of the town there then stood a mansion surrounded with pleasure-grounds. Wesley probably visited the mansion; but he was mainly struck with the degradation of the townfolk. He says that he was much shocked at the drunkenness and profanity of the people, for even the little children cursed and swore. On Sunday he and his travelling companion took their stand near the pump, "in the poorest and most contemptible part of the town, and began to sing the Hundredth Psalm. Three or four people came out in order to learn what the noise meant; others followed them, and before the sermon was over a congregation of from twelve to fifteen hundred people had assembled. The text of the sermon was, "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with

His stripes we are healed." John Wesley, seeing the intense astonishment of the people, said after that the service had finished, "If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help, I design to preach here again."

"Such was the commencement of Methodism in the North of England; the preacher, the renowned John Wesley, doubtless dressed in full canonicals, with plain John Taylor standing at his side; the time seven o'clock on a Sunday morning in the beautiful month of May; the place, Sandgate, crowded with keelmen and sailors, using, says Christopher Hoppe, 'The language of hell, as though they had received a liberal education in the regions of woe;' the song of praise, the old Hundredth Psalm, which, like the grand old ocean, is as fresh and as full of music now as it was when it was first written; and the text the very pith of Gospel truth" (Tyerman).

In the evening Wesley found that the hill on which he intended to stand was covered with people from the summit down to the base. He had often before preached to twenty thousand people, but this congregation was the largest that he had ever seen. "After preaching," he writes, "the poor people were ready to tread me under foot out of pure love and kindness."

From Newcastle he next went to Epworth, where he took up his lodging in an inn. Here an old servant of the parsonage found him out. On Sunday morning he offered to assist the curate either by

preaching or by reading prayers. The curate, however, who had owed much to Wesley's father, refused to permit this, and still further proved his ingratitude by preaching an offensive and foolish sermon levelled against the son of his benefactor. As the congregation filed out into the churchyard, John Taylor gave notice that "Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, designs to preach here at six o'clock." The largest congregation that had ever been seen in Epworth assembled at six o'clock, when Wesley stood on his father's tombstone and preached to them. "I am well assured," he says, "that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit."

For eight days he remained at Epworth, and each evening he used the gravestone as a pulpit. One incident of the preaching has been preserved. A gentleman who had not attended any form of public worship for more than thirty years stood listening to Wesley. He was as motionless as a statue. "Sir, are you a sinner?" asked Wesley. "Sinner enough!" the man made answer, and stood staring upwards until his wife and servant put him into his carriage and took him home.

Wesley thus wisely comments upon his visit to Epworth: "Let none think his labour of love is lost because the fruit does not immediately appear. Nearly forty years did my father labour here, but he saw little fruit of all his labour. I took some pains among

this people too, and my strength also seemed spent in vain ; but now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed sown so long since now sprung up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins."

During this visit to his early home, Wesley waited upon a neighbouring justice who had ventured to show some favour to the generally-despised Methodists.

A whole waggon-load of these terrible criminals had been brought before this magistrate.

"What have they done?" he asked; but that was a trifle upon which no one had expended any thought. At length some bold spirit said, "They pretend to be better than other people, and pray from morning to night."

"But have they done nothing beside?" asked the justice.

"Yes, an't please your worship," said an old man, "they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue, and now she is as quiet as a lamb!"

"Take them back! Take them back!" said the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

After his return to London from this visit, Wesley found his mother dying. In his journal there is this entry, which throws light upon his mother's spiritual growth:—

"1739, *Sept.* 3.—I talked largely with my mother, who told me that till a short time since she had scarce

heard such a thing mentioned as the having God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit; much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' she said, 'I never durst ask it for myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing these words in delivering the cup to me, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee," the words struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven all my sins.'"

She died of gout on Friday, 23rd July 1742. Her last request, uttered just before she lost her speech, was, "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God." She was buried in Bunhill Fields, and Wesley preached to an enormous throng from beside the grave. The three months after his mother's death Wesley spent in travelling to and fro between Bristol and London. His brother Charles was labouring in Newcastle. In November John Wesley also went down to the northern city, and there he remained for seven weeks. During the eight months that had elapsed since Wesley's first sermon, more than eight hundred persons had been brought out of sin, and, said Wesley, "I never saw a work of God in any other place so evenly and gradually carried on. It continually rose step by step. Not so much seemed to be done at any one time as had been frequently done at Bristol or London, but something at every time."

Here Wesley erected a chapel, towards the cost of

which a Quaker contributed £100. In this building a school was conducted, and a Bible Society carried on a good work long before the London Society was established, and here also a Sunday-school of one thousand children gathered every Sunday.

But although Methodism had now a respectful hearing among the colliers and pitmen, it was still persecuted in many places. In London huge stones were flung upon the house in which Wesley was preaching. These broke through the tiles and endangered the lives of the congregation.

At Pensford, near Bristol, a hired mob drove a bull that had been baited into the midst of the congregation. Not satisfied with this outrage, they tore the little table on which John Wesley stood into fragments. These furious assaults did not daunt the preachers. They continued in spite of all opposition.

In spite of their attempts to soothe their enemies, the year 1743 was a year of conflict and of persecution for the evangelists.

On the first day in that year Wesley was riding from Doncaster to Epworth, when he met with a drunken traveller. This man was horrified upon discovering who his companion was, and shouting, "I am a Christian! I am a Churchman! I am no Culamite!" he made off as quickly as he could.

At Epworth itself John Wesley was refused the sacrament. "Tell Mr. Wesley I shall not give him the sacrament," said the curate, "for he is not fit."

Wesley took the insult patiently. He meekly writes: "How wise a God is our God! There could not have been so fit a place under heaven where this should befall me first as my father's home, the place of my nativity, and the very place where, according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. It was also fit in the highest degree that he who repelled me from that very table where I had myself so often distributed the word of life, should be one who owed his all in this world to the tender love which my father had shown to his, as well as personally to himself."

He had sore need for all the patience that he possessed, for on the 18th of June he received news of terrible riots in Staffordshire.

At Wednesbury a Society had been established, which was fairly prosperous, when it was assailed by an outbreak of persecution.

On the 20th Wesley went down to Wednesbury, and found that the rioters had damaged about eighty houses in which Methodists resided.

The magistrates refused to interfere for the protection of the assailed; one of them roughly refused to grant a warrant against the rioters. "I suppose that you follow these persons who come about," he said; "I will neither meddle nor make."

Encouraged by this tacit approval, the rabble grew more violent, and on the 20th of October Wesley had a narrow escape from death. An angry mob beset

his house and called out for him. Wesley requested three of the wildest to come in and speak with him. They did so, and he soon pacified them. Accompanied by these men, Wesley dauntlessly went out among the rabble. He asked what they wanted with him. "We want you to go with us to our magistrate," said a voice.

"That I will with all my heart," said Wesley.

When they reached the house of the judge with their prisoner, they made their complaint thus: "To be plain, sir, if I must speak the truth, all the fault I find with him is that he preaches better than our parsons."

"It is a downright shame," called out another of the mob. "He makes people rise at five in the morning to sing psalms. What advice would your worship give us?"

"Go home and be quiet," was all the counsel that the justice cared to give.

The mob hurried Wesley to another magistrate, who also declined to interfere. Then a second mob assailed him, and it seemed as if his life-work was at an end.

Several tried to seize him in order to pull him down. One man struck at him with a huge oak club. Another lifted his arm to deliver a furious blow, but dropped his arm and stroked Wesley's head, saying, "What soft hair he has!"

"Knock out his brains! Kill him at once!" cried the mob.

Then God appeared for him. The leader of the mob suddenly turned round and said, "Sir, I will spend my life for you. Follow me, and none shall hurt a hair of your head." The man and two of his companions brought Wesley in safety out of the mob.

Wesley undoubtedly possessed a great deal of what Napoleon called "four-o'clock-in-the-morning courage;" he certainly displayed it upon this occasion. During these terrible five hours of conflict he says, "I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind that if they should throw me into the river it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket."

Three men and a woman were with Wesley through this trying time. Their spirit was similar to his. When asked if she were not afraid, the woman answered, "No, no more than I am now! I could trust God for you as well as for myself." When asked what he expected when the mob laid hold upon him, one of the men replied, "To die for Him who died for us!"

No wonder that Methodism carried everything before it when its rank and file could speak and act so nobly. Out of such heroes the Church of God is made, and it inspires them to speak and to act thus.

"By all Hell's host withstood,
We all Hell's host o'erthrow;
And conquering them through Jesus' blood,
We on to victory go."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN PERILS FROM MEN; OR, THE AGE OF MOBS.

“When men beheld his dauntless faith,
And how it stayed itself on the Unseen,
'Gainst all the laws of Nature from without,
And 'gainst all fears within, assuredly
It could not fail to tell on countless hearts.”—POLLOK.

“The avenues that led
To immortality before him lay ;
He saw, with faith's far-seeing eye, the fount
Of life, his Father's house, his Saviour God,
And hurried thence to help his present work.”
—THE COURSE OF TIME.

1743-1745.

WHY THE COW LOOKED OVER THE WALL—THE PRAYERS IN
“ROBINSON CRUSOE”—THE SKIN IS NOT OFF ONE SIDE YET
—LAST SERMON AT OXFORD—PUTTING ALL THE LARGE
WORDS OUT—THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND—A METHODIST'S HAND
—“GRACE MURRAY, YOU HAVE BROKEN MY HEART.”

“Do you know why that cow looks over that wall?”
Wesley asked a friend. The man had been speaking
about his troubles, and saying that he knew not what
he should do. “Do you know why that cow looks
over that wall?” “No,” replied his friend. “I will

tell you, then," replied Wesley. "She looks *over* the wall because she cannot look *through* it. And that is what you must do with your troubles; look over and above them."

In which thing consists all the difference between one man and another, for while the one type of character is for ever glaring at a stone wall and grieving about the solidity of its masonry, the other looks over it and sees the fair prospect beyond. A stone wall has its uses, but it is certainly not the most useful object on which to exercise the optic nerves. God gave us eyes that we might look over the walls, that He sees to be needful, in order that we may study the fair pictures that He is working every day around us. Had not Wesley been a man who looked over the wall, he could never have survived such a fierce conflict as assailed him. In the year 1774 he reviews his past experience, and says, in reference to his former persecutions, "For nearly fifty years I have been called to go through evil report and good report; and indeed the latter without the former would be 'a test for human frailty too severe.' But when one balances the other, all is well. The north wind prevents the ill effect of the sunshine; and the providence of God has in this respect been highly remarkable. Reproach came first from men of no character either for learning or religion, though they had sense and learning; and afterwards from men that were eminent for religion and learning too. But then we were old weather-beaten soldiers, so that a storm of

that kind did not affright us, neither did it surprise us at all, as we had long weighed that word which we knew must be fulfilled, 'If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?' "

We have already seen how Wednesbury treated Wesley; in Cornwall he was also fiercely opposed. Cornwall was then as drunken and ignorant as any part of England; indeed, probably worse. It is related that in a village situated about five miles from Helstone there was no Bible; indeed, no religious book whatever except one copy of the Prayer-Book, and that was kept at a public-house. A terrible storm broke over the village, and the people flocked to the inn that the tapster might read them a prayer by way of protection. The tapster seized a book and began reading. "Tom, that is 'Robinson Crusoe,'" called out one man. "No," said Tom, "it is the Prayer-Book," and read on. At last another asserted that the book was certainly "Robinson Crusoe." "Well, well, suppose I am reading 'Robinson Crusoe;' there are as good prayers in 'Robinson Crusoe' as in any other book," said Tom complacently, and continued his reading. These were the people who were incited by their ministers against the Methodists, who, said one curate, "ought to be driven away by blows, and not by arguments."

Charles Wesley, who was the first to penetrate into this heathen district, was furiously assailed; a drum was beaten to drown his voice, a fierce rabble burst

into the room where he was preaching, demolished the furniture, ill-treated those who were present, and would have killed the preacher had they not quarrelled among themselves.

This was in July 1747. Two months afterwards John Wesley himself came down to Cornwall, accompanied by John Nelson, the preaching stonemason, and two other friends. "It was seldom," says Nelson, "that any one asked us to eat or drink. One day, as we returned from St. Hilary Downs, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the best country I ever saw for getting an appetite, but the worst for getting food.'" For three weeks the preachers slept on a floor, Wesley using his companion's topcoat for a pillow, while Nelson used Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament for a support for his head. One morning about three o'clock, after about a fortnight of this rough life, Wesley turned over, clapped Nelson on the side, and said, "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, for the skin is off but one side of my body as yet."

Nor was this treatment to be wondered at when ministers were found who could dare to say publicly, while preaching against the Methodists, "Many texts in the Bible are for them, but you ought not to mind these texts, for the Papists have put them in."

In spite of all this opposition, the Methodists not

only grew in numbers, but they gradually consolidated their organisation.

On the 25th of June 1744 the first Methodist Conference was held in the Foundry, London. Six clergymen and four lay-preachers were then present. Wesley might then have used Ruskin's words with great effect and truth: "The goodly tree whose roots, by God's help, were set in earth to-day, will not fail of its height because the planting of it was under poor auspices, or the first shoots were enfeebled by ill gardening."

In the course of the same year, 1744, that is, on the 24th of August, Wesley preached for the last time before the University of Oxford. "The beadle came to me afterwards, and told me the Vice-Chancellor had sent him for my notes. I sent them without delay, not without admiring the wise providence of God. Perhaps few men of note would have given a sermon of mine the reading, if I had put it into their hands, but by this means it came to be read probably more than once by every man of eminence in the University."

The Dean of Christchurch said of the preacher, "John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast." Dr. Kennicott, from whom we learn this, says of the preacher, "He is neither tall nor fat; for the latter would ill become a Methodist. His black hair, quite smooth, and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his

countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man."

This was Wesley's last sermon before the University, for seven years after preaching it he resigned his Fellowship. Henceforward his mission was not to labour among universities that did not admire his preaching, but among angry mobs, who assailed him and his preachers with fierce and murderous intentions. It recalls the heroism of the early Christians when we read how the Methodist preachers dauntlessly continued to brave ill-usage and death simply for the pleasure of doing good to their enemies. Wesley asks pungently, "For what pay could we procure men to do this service—to be always ready to go to prison or to death?"

Thomas Maxfield, one of Wesley's preachers, was seized as a soldier and thrown into gaol. Another man who had seven children dependent upon him was also thrust into prison. "The man is well enough in other things," said his persecutors, "but the gentlemen cannot stand his impudence. Why, sir, he says he knows his sins are forgiven."

The enlightened magistrates who thrust a man into prison for believing God's Word sent a warrant for Wesley's arrest. Two men, raging like madmen, rode into the midst of an open-air congregation and began ill-using the people. They seized Wesley by the cassock and compelled him to go with them. The next day a furious mob assailed the house in which Wesley lived, and for some time he was in imminent peril of

his life. In the parish accounts there is still to be seen an entry of seven shillings and sixpence that was expended "in driving the Methodists out of the parish."

In the same year, 1745, Wesley went again into the North. He performed the journey of 280 miles upon horseback, and through a country that was a trackless expanse of snow. "Many a rough journey I have had before," said Wesley, "but one like this I never had, between wind and hail, and rain and ice, and snow and driving sleet, and piercing cold."

Wesley was in the North during the excitement of the Jacobite rising. He himself was a steady adherent to the Hanoverian dynasty, and though he suffered some inconvenience from the disturbed state of the country, John Wesley was not the man to desist from what he felt to be his life work and mission.

About his preaching we have several anecdotes, which serve to explain somewhat his power. In the year 1738 he was appointed to preach at All-Hallows Church in Lombard Street, London, when at the foot of the pulpit stairs he hesitated and turned back into the vestry. A woman who observed his distress asked what ailed him. He replied that he had not a written sermon with him. "Is that all? Cannot you trust God for a sermon?" she inquired. Wesley resolved that he would do so; he preached extempore, and from that time he abandoned the practice of reading his sermons.

Of course such a man as Wesley was in a constant

state of preparation. He did always as he advised his preachers—that is, “to be diligent, never to be unemployed a moment. Spend all the morning, or at least five hours out of the twenty-four, in reading the *most useful* books, and that regularly and constantly. But I read only the Bible, you say. Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and by parity of reason to *hear only* the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell, and what was the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. But I have *no taste* for reading. Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.”

Thus Wesley was constantly reading, so that he was in no sense ever unprepared. Then, too, his style as a preacher was most plain and homely. “I design plain truths for plain people; therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculation, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings, and as far as possible from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture. . . . I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I read His book, for the end to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? . . . I lift up my heart to the Father of lights, and ask Him to let me know His will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of

Scripture. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby being dead they yet speak. And what I thus learn I teach."

He related that once he preached one of his most polished sermons in a country church, and "noticing the people gaped and stared so much, I concluded they did not understand it. I then put out all the words I thought not in common use, and in preaching the sermon again, I noticed they heard it with their mouths half-open. I then said, 'It will not do yet.' In the house where I lodged there was an intelligent servant-maid, and at a leisure hour I called her in and said, 'Betty, I have preached a sermon, and have some doubts whether the people understand me. I will read it slowly, and you will stop me at every word you do not understand, and I will change it for a word that you know; and if you understand the sermon, the people will understand it.' So I proceeded, writing a plain word over every hard word. At length, 'Stop, sir! stop, sir!' came so often that I grew impatient, and I said, 'I am surprised at you, Betty; I am sure that everybody will understand that word.' To which she replied, 'I do not know, sir, what it means.' Suffice it to say that I read the sermon through, and on preaching it a third time, the people heard it with their mouths shut."

This plainness certainly increased his usefulness, but it was not appreciated by some. At Lincoln a lady exclaimed after service, "Is this the great Mr. Wesley of whom we hear so much in the present day? Why, the poorest might have understood him." "In that, madam, he displays his greatness," said a gentleman who stood by. "While the poorest can understand him, the most learned are edified and cannot be offended."

At Doncaster Wesley related the following incident: "A poor woman of the Roman Catholic persuasion, having had the misfortune to break her china crucifix, immediately went to her priest to inform him, mourning greatly on account of the sad circumstance, and frequently crying out, 'Now I have broken my crucifix, I have nothing to trust in but the great God.'" Wesley repeated these words with deep feeling, and exclaimed, "What a mercy she had the great God to trust in!" These words touched the heart of a respectable Romanist who was present, and convinced him of sin. He felt that the great God was sufficient for his needs, and joined the Wesleyan Society.

Here may, perhaps, best be noticed the tender love that the great preacher had for children.

Upon one occasion, not long before his death, Wesley found a child upon the pulpit-stairs. He stopped and instinctively kissed the child.

"When I was a child," says Robert Southey, "I was in a house in Bristol where Wesley was. On running

downstairs before him, with a beautiful little sister of my own, he overtook us on the landing, when he lifted my sister in his arms and kissed her. Placing her on her feet again, he then put his hand upon my head and blessed me, and I feel as though I had the blessing of that good man upon me still." Another lady speaks thus of his visits to the school in which she was: "On these occasions we were all up at five o'clock in the morning; and I well remember it was considered a great treat to me and others. He always kept a little comb in his pocket, and used to take me between his knees and separate my hair in the front, after the manner he wore his own, and patted me gently on the head, saying he hoped I was a good girl, and that I prayed to God; for if I was not a good girl, I must have a pat on the head, but he would not wish it to be very hard. I well remember that I thought I should like him for a schoolmaster, if I was to be dealt with so kindly."

Such trifles reveal the character and innate kindness of the man. How many are there of whom children would entertain a similar opinion? Children instinctively understand character, and they are the best judges of worth and goodness.

Another instance of his delicacy and tenderness is thus recorded. After one of his sermons he went with one of his preachers to luncheon with a gentleman. The preacher was rough and plain, and unused to the restraints of good society. He was talking with the

daughter of their host, a lady who was remarkable for her beauty. This lady had been deeply impressed by Wesley's preaching, and the man observed that she wore a number of rings. Knowing Mr. Wesley's aversion to finery, he took the lady's hand, and holding it in full view, "What do you think of this, sir, for a Methodist's hand?" he asked. The lady blushed crimson, and no wonder, at such rudeness. Wesley with a quiet benevolent smile remarked, "Yes, the hand is very beautiful!"

The lady made no reply, but she contrived to divest herself of the rings; the reproof was none the less strong because it was so gentle.

Wesley was not always so wise as in this case; his unfortunate marriage has been a frequent subject of remark. It may be perhaps best noticed here.

While in Newcastle, Wesley was nursed during a slight illness by Grace Murray, a young Methodist widow. She had been converted under Wesley's preaching; he had asked in the course of his sermon, "Is there any one here who has a true desire to be saved?" "Yes, I have," she replied mentally. "My soul for thine, if thou continue lying at the feet of Jesus;" said Wesley, and she took hold of this word. Wesley himself says of Grace Murray, "She was remarkably neat; nicely frugal, yet not sordid; gifted with a large amount of common sense; indefatigably patient and inexpressibly tender; quick, cleanly, and skilful, and of a mild, sprightly, cheerful, and yet serious

temper; while, lastly, her gifts for usefulness were such as he had not seen equalled."

John Wesley proposed to her in August 1748, and she replied, "This is too great a blessing for me. I can't tell how to believe it. This is all I could have wished for under heaven."

The two were engaged, much to the anger of some of Wesley's friends, and notably of his brother Charles. Grace Murray was either a flirt or else she was pestered with the attentions of one of Wesley's preachers. Through the interference of Charles Wesley, Grace Murray suddenly married her other suitor. Wesley felt this keenly.

"Grace Murray, you have broken my heart," said he to her, and he was so indignant with his brother for his unneeded interference, that he said to him, "I renounce all intercourse with you, but what I would have with a heathen man or a publican."

"Since I was six years old, I never met with such a severe trial as of some days past," Wesley wrote to a friend. "For ten years God had been preparing a fellow-labourer for me by a wonderful train of providences. But we were soon torn asunder by a whirlwind. . . . I fasted and prayed, and strove all I could, but the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for me."

Wesley felt this blow keenly; nor had his friends much cause for congratulation, for in February 1751 he married a Mrs. Vazeille, the widow of a London merchant. The marriage was most unfortunate, for

the lady was ill-tempered—indeed, a virago. In ancient times it is said that such as were afflicted with angry wives surreptitiously placed *Loosèstrife* under the chair of the scold, always with beneficial effects. John Wesley, although wise in the use of herbs, either did not follow the ancient custom, or he did so in vain.

In one of her fits of passion, Mrs. Wesley imprisoned her husband and his brother Charles in a room. She then scolded them with much vigour and detail. Eventually Charles calmed her by quoting Latin poetry to her. One of the preachers once found John Wesley prostrate on the floor of a room, his wife foaming with rage in her victory. She held in her hand some of the hair that she had dragged from his head. "More than once," says this witness, "she laid violent hands on him, and tore those venerable locks which had suffered sufficiently from the ravages of time."

She slandered him, stopped, opened, and altered his letters, and at length she left him. One is not surprised that Wesley wrote in his journal the oft-quoted words, "Non eam reliquæ ; non dismissi ; non revocabo." "I did not forsake her ; I did not dismiss her ; I will not recall her."

Telford remarks upon this unhappy woman: "She darkened thirty years of Wesley's life by her intolerable jealousy, her malicious and violent temper. Wesley would never sacrifice his duty to personal feeling, but though he was a roving husband, a more tender or more pleasant companion no woman could desire. He

repeatedly told Henry Moore that he believed God overruled this prolonged sorrow for his good, and that if Mrs. Wesley had been a better wife, and had continued to act in that way in which she knew well how to act, he might have been unfaithful to his great work, and might have sought too much to please her according to her own desires."

One can only deeply regret that a life such as Wesley's should have been so shadowed, and that in his case he did not put into practice his own rules. To his preachers he gave this sound advice, "Take no step towards marriage without solemn prayer to God and consulting with your brethren."

Alas! how few marriages realise the Divine ideal in the blending of two lives in one for the service of God and for mutual happiness and increased power to serve God!

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAN WHOSE PREJUDICES YIELDED TO THE FORCE OF TRUTH.

"No offering of my own I have,
No works my faith to prove ;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love."—WHITTIER.

"We are toilers in the harvest ;
Fields are ripe but reapers few ;
Ere the day of His appearing,
There is much for us to do.
Jesus calls us,
To His call may each be true."

1748—1766.

PREJUDICES — HAVE PATIENCE — IS MARRIAGE A FAILURE? —
"SILVER-TONGUED ANTICHRISTS" — RELIGIOUS NONSENSE —
FOUR WAYS OF GOING TO HEAVEN — THE PLAIN DEALER — THE
ASS AS A HEARER — "THOU SHALT NOT BE DROWNED."

"THERE were prejudices here and prejudices there, but his prejudices always gave way to the force of truth," said Dr. Adam Clarke when speaking of John Wesley. This was said in answer to a lady who had inquired, "Was not Mr. Fletcher a holier man than John Wesley?" The Doctor lifted his hands and

said, "No, no; there was no man like John Wesley. There was no man whom God could trust with the work he had to do but John Wesley. There were prejudices here and prejudices there, but his prejudices always gave way to the force of truth. The personal religion sufficient for Mr. Fletcher in his limited sphere was far below that deep intimacy with God necessary for Mr. Wesley in the amazing labour he had to undergo, the persecution he had to face, the calumnies he had to endure, his fighting without, the opposition arising from members of Society within, and his care of all the churches."

To which pleasing tribute from one great man to a greater we may add the testimony of Whitfield, who differed widely from Wesley upon doctrinal points, and who is therefore an unprejudiced witness as to his friend's integrity. Some one asked him, "Sir, do you think when we get to heaven we shall see Mr. Wesley?" and further expressed his own doubt as to the possibility of Mr. Wesley's salvation. Whitfield promptly replied, "No, sir, I fear not; for he will be so near the throne, and we shall be at such a distance, we shall hardly get sight of him." Whitfield was very humble and tender, but he was also truthful, and he would not have said this had he not been convinced of Wesley's real worth and piety.

It was part of Wesley's virtue to be well employed. He had been warned that he could not go to heaven alone, and he was unceasing in his evangelistic labours.

On the 8th of March 1748 Wesley arrived in Dublin. His brother Charles had been labouring for six months among the Irish, and had somewhat overstated his success in winning converts. His calmer brother advised that in future all should make conscience of magnifying or of exaggerating anything, and especially to speak under rather than over the truth, when speaking of the results of their work.

Altogether Wesley spent about six weeks in Ireland, and his advice to the Christian workers there is noteworthy and true of all similar service. "Have patience," he said, "have patience, and Ireland will repay you." Patience is indeed the chief requisite in all Christian work; have patience, and thou shalt be repaid.

At the Annual Conference which was held after John Wesley's return to England, the important subject of marriage was discussed. "Some of our brethren objected to my book, '*Thoughts on Marriage*,'" says Wesley, "and in a full and friendly debate convinced me that a believer *might marry without loss to his soul*." This important accession to his knowledge was followed by a most important event in Methodist annals. On the 24th of June of the same year, Wesley opened his school at Kingswood, near Bristol. He was himself a most ardent educationalist, and, unlike the majority of his age, he foresaw that this question was the crux of the moral position.

Although Wesley was in advance of his age, in

some points the arrangements of his school may be considered as open to some objections. Every child was compelled to rise at four o'clock in the morning, and until five was expected to read, meditate, sing, or pray. Every healthy child was also required to fast every Friday until three o'clock in the afternoon. Upon the absurd principle that he who plays as a child will also play when he becomes a man, no playtime was permitted. Yet, with all these glaring defects, the school was a great advance upon anything that had then been thought of.

Three days after the inauguration of this noble enterprise Wesley set out for the North of England. There he met with the usual opposition. At Colne the curate himself invited all who were disposed to attack the Methodists to "repair to the drumhead at the cross, where each man shall have a pint of ale for advance and other proper encouragements." Under the influence of these "encouragements" some of the mob struck Wesley to the ground, while others beat him and his friends.

At Shackerley, which is situated six miles from Bolton, Wesley encountered the Unitarians, of whom he says, "Oh, what a providence is it which has brought us here also, among these *silver-tongued Antichrists*."

Wesley was accustomed to use plain speech, and he fully realised the vast gulf that separates the Unitarians from all who hold by the Divinity and vicarious substitution of our Lord. Of late years

there has been too much of unholy alliance with those who cannot be called Christians without dishonouring the name. In a volume which has just been issued as an exposition of Unitarian belief it is asserted that "to love Jesus is not a Christian duty ;" that we may without fault "admire Socrates more, love Marcus Aurelius better." It is true that this writer condescends "to recognise in Jesus a powerful and legitimate (!!) religious influence, even in these modern times;" but any denomination that could so speak about the Redeemer shuts itself out from communion with evangelical Christianity. Forms of church government, differences of opinion upon doctrinal points, are as nothing ; the difference of opinion between the Unitarians and those who believe in the Divinity, and therefore in the atonement of Christ, is upon vital points ; either we are idolaters or they are silver-tongued Antichrists. It is well not to deceive ourselves by a false charity ; the interests at stake are too vital and immense to be sunk or imperilled. On social questions even it is better not to work with those with whose doctrinal heresies we cannot sympathise, because we believe that if the Divinity and atonement be taken away, we shall have a Gospel that is worthless and useless. We dare not comfort the King's enemies. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate."

In the year 1750 an earthquake shook London, and a month afterwards a more violent shock occurred. This occasioned great alarm. Ladies made what

Walpole calls "*earthquake gowns*, that is, warm gowns in which to sit out of doors all night."

Wesley and his friends held a solemn fast-day, and while many were provoked to greater excess of riot and debauchery by the recent peril, many others were made serious and thoughtful.

Horace Walpole, with characteristic frivolity, wrote : "Methodism in the metropolis is more fashionable than anything but 'brag;' the women play very deep at both. . . . This sect (Methodism) increases as fast as almost any religious nonsense ever did. . . . The Methodists love your big sinners as proper subjects to work upon, and they have a plentiful harvest. Flagrancy was never more in fashion; drinking is at the highest wine mark."

If in London the Methodists had advanced, they had declined in Bristol. During the year Wesley lamented that instead of adding a hundred members, as they had done during the previous year, they had lost that number.

On the 19th of March 1750 Wesley went once more to Ireland. Here the evangelists had met with a rough reception. The grand jury had not only thrown out the bills against those who had assailed the preachers, but they had made a presentment to the effect that Charles Wesley and seven other Methodist preachers were persons of ill-fame, vagabonds, and common disturbers of His Majesty's peace, and ought to be transported,

Wesley's reception was such as might have been expected; he found the Societies flourishing, probably because of the fierce light that beat upon them, and that rendered hypocrisy impossible. He himself had to face the mob, and to endure hardness and assault as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

At Cork the mayor brought the town-drummers and prevented his voice being heard. At another place four dogs were let loose and enticed to worry him. "Oh, who would drag me into a great city," he said, when overcome by these annoyances, "if I did not know there is another world?"

Yet afterwards, in calmer moments, he reviewed his campaign in Ireland with pleasure. He observed what great numbers of new members had been added to the Societies, and among these were some who had once been ringleaders in wickedness. "I suppose the number would have been greater," he said, "had not the good Protestants, as well as the Popish priests, taken true pains to hinder them."

On arriving in England, Wesley spent some time in Bristol. Thence he went to Cornwall, where the usual reception awaited him.

At Shaftesbury a constable said to him, "Sir, the mayor discharges you from preaching in this borough any more." "While King George gives me leave to preach, I shall not ask leave of the mayor of Shaftesbury," replied Wesley, and he was henceforward unmolested.

The year 1751 was notable as the year of John

Wesley's unfortunate marriage, to which reference has already been made.

On the 15th of April of this year Wesley set out for Scotland. It was his first visit to the northern kingdom, and some of his first impressions were not favourable. Edinburgh he describes as "one of the dirtiest cities he had ever seen." His brother Charles said, "You may just as well preach to the stones as to the Scots;" but John Wesley thought otherwise.

He urged his helpers to preach abroad as much as possible; to try every town and village, and to visit every member of the Society at home. Leaving Scotland in August of the same year, Wesley went once more to Tiverton. There a mob came with horns, drums, and fifes, creating all the disturbance possible. A poor chimney-sweeper was nearly murdered by the rabble. The mayor of the town asked a gentleman if it was not right to banish the Maccabees (as he called the Methodists) from Tiverton. "There is no need of any new religion in Tiverton," he said with an oath. "There is the old Church and the new Church, that is one religion. Then there is Parson K——'s at the Pitt meeting, and Parson W——'s in Peter Street, and old Parson T——'s at the meeting in Newport Street—four ways of going to heaven already. That is enough, in conscience, and if the people won't go to heaven by one or other of these ways, they shan't go to heaven at all herefrom, while I am mayor of Tiverton."

The next year Wesley was at Hull, where a rude

mob met him and shouted, "Which is he? which is he?" as if he were a wild beast. Wesley preached to them, and said he, "But many behaved as if possessed by Moloch. Clods and stones flew on every side." Wesley's wife was with him, and at a friend's invitation they took shelter in a carriage. Wesley naïvely says, "There were nine of us in the coach, three on each side and three in the middle. The mob closely attended us, throwing in at the windows whatever came next to hand; but *a large gentlewoman who sat in my lap screened me, so that nothing came near me.*"

In 1753 Wesley, after preaching at Leigh in Essex, caught a severe cold. He returned to London, where he "had a settled pain in his left breast, a violent cough, and a slow fever." Acting upon medical advice, Wesley moved on to Lewisham. It was then supposed that he was in a consumption, and believing that his days were numbered, he wrote his own epitaph.

"Not knowing how it might please God to dispose of me, to prevent vile panegyric I wrote as follows:—

HERE LIETH THE BODY

OF

JOHN WESLEY,

A brand plucked out of the burning ;

Who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age,
Not leaving, after all his debts were paid, ten pounds behind him ;

Praying

God be merciful to me, an unprofitable servant.

He ordered that this, if any, inscription should be placed on his tombstone."

The tidings of Wesley's serious illness aroused deep and widespread sympathy. Whitfield wrote a tender and gracious letter to his friend, in which he said, "My heart is too big; tears trickle down too fast; and you, I fear, are too weak for me to enlarge. Underneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms! I commend you to His never-failing mercy, and am, reverend and very dear sir, your most affectionate sympathising and afflicted younger brother in the Gospel of our common Lord."

One wise and thoughtful arrangement which was suggested by Wesley's illness was to devolve the care of the books, and indeed all his temporal anxieties connected with the Methodist Societies, upon the stewards. This was not only a relief to him, but a step forward towards the consolidation and perpetuation of the Methodist Church, although as such he did not then regard it. He only slowly regained his health, and at the beginning of the following year, while an invalid at Hotwell, Bristol, he began his useful Notes on the New Testament.

On the 26th of March he preached for the first time after a four months' silence. He was then so weak that he said, "I have not recovered my whole voice or strength; perhaps I never may; but let me use what I have."

On the 15th of April 1755 Wesley visited Liverpool for the first time. The people thronged to hear him preach, but, says he, "Many of them, I learned,

were dear lovers of controversy ; but I had better work. I pressed upon them all repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

In front of the Liverpool Chapel in Pitt Street there was a large pool of water, across which the Methodists had to pass by the help of stepping-stones. Forty years after this visit the famous Dr. Adam Clarke was minister of this chapel. His residence he describes as being "neither in hell nor purgatory, yet in a place of torment."

"But where is it?"

"You must go down Dale Street, then-along East Street, and when you are up to the middle in clay and mud, call out lustily for Adam Clarke."

Among the first worshippers in this chapel behind the pool was a tailor named Timothy. Timothy was a dwarf, and he rejoiced in a huge wife, who did not share his religious opinions. She was not content with much verbal persecution of her husband on account of his Methodist propensities, but one day she even drove a herd of pigs toward the chapel with intent to disturb the congregation that had therein assembled. But the pigs obstinately refused to enter the chapel, and the woman herself went into the chapel, and sat down within the door. She thus heard the Gospel for the first time, and was converted by it. For sixteen years she was as valiant for the truth as she had been against it.

At the Conference of 1755, at which not less than

sixty-five preachers were present, Wesley spoke plainly as follows :—

“It has been affirmed that none of our itinerant preachers are so much alive as they were seven years ago. I fear many are not. But if so, they are unfit for the work which requires much life. Otherwise your labour will be tiresome to yourself, and of little use to others. Tiresome, because you will no longer serve Christ and the people willingly and cheerfully. Of little use, because you will no longer serve them diligently, doing it with all your might. I have several reasons to fear it is so with many of you, but let your own conscience be the judge.

Who of you is exemplarily alive to God, so as to carry fire with him wherever he goes?

Who of you is a pattern of self-denial even in little things?

Who of you drinks water? Why not?

Who of you rises at four? Why not?

Who of you fasts on Fridays? Why not?

Who has not four meals a day?

Who goes through his work willingly and diligently? never on any account disappointing a congregation?

Who has every part of the Plan at heart? always meets Society, wards, and leaders?

Who visits in Mr. Baxter's method?

Who preaches the old thundering doctrine, no faith without light?

Who constantly and zealously enforces practical religion? relative duties? recommends books? Kingswood school?

Who is never idle?

What assistant enforces uniformly every branch of the Methodist Plan on the preachers and people?

Who visits all Societies regularly?

Do you see every preacher observe the rules?

Do you reprove, and, if need be, send me word of the defaulters?

Do you send me a regular account quarterly?

Is your whole heart in the work?

Do not you give way to unconcern, indolence, and fear of men?"

These are pungent questions, and show how deeply Wesley must have been beloved that he could have spoken so plainly without a disruption.

At this Conference the question was debated and decided as to the advisability or otherwise of separating from the Established Church. It was resolved that to do so was not expedient.

In the year 1757, while at Grampound, which place Mr. Wesley calls a mere inconsiderate village, the mayor sent the constables to say to him, "Sir, the mayor says you shall not preach within his borough." "The mayor has no authority to hinder me," said Mr. Wesley, "but it is a point not worth contesting." So he went about a bowshot farther, and left the borough to Mr. Mayor's disposal.

In 1758 Wesley once more spoke plainly to his preachers. He informed them that they "must do one of three things: either spend time in chat-chat, or learn Latin or Hebrew, or spend all their time and strength in saving souls. Which will you do?" "The last, by the grace of God," was the reply.

In 1759 Wesley was at Newcastle, and while preaching from the Exchange steps, some of the congregation began to pelt him with rotten eggs and mud. A huge fishwoman, who was the terror of the locality, ran up the steps, and threw one arm round Wesley's neck. "If ony o' ye lift up another hand to touch ma canny man, ayl floor ye direckly," she cried, and the threat saved Wesley from farther molestation.

Preaching that was attended with such incidents may have possessed romance; it certainly possessed considerable danger. "What marvel the devil does not love field-preaching?" asks Wesley; "neither do I. I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, and a handsome pulpit. But where's my zeal if I do not trample all these under foot, in order to save one more soul?"

In Ireland on one occasion the magistrate and his officer rushed up to Wesley and shouted, "You shall not preach here to-day." "Sir, I do not intend it; I have preached already." Whereupon the representative of law beat and kicked Wesley's hat most valiantly by way of revenge.

On the 29th of July 1761, Wesley preached the

opening sermon of a new octagon chapel which had been erected for the Methodists at Rotherham. He much admired the shape of the structure, and thought it a pity, where the ground admitted of octagon, that any other form should be adopted. During this sermon an ass was driven into the aisle. The ass stood in the aisle, lifted its eyes to the preacher, and when the sermon was done, turned tail and walked away. It was the most attentive hearer that Wesley had ever had; so at least he averred.

At Misterton, on the contrary, Wesley declared his congregation to be a lifeless money-getting people; at Sibsey, he said that they were "wild colts."

At Carrickfergus he had to defer the preaching because "the delicate and curious hearers could not possibly rise before ten o'clock."

"Poor dead Portarlington," said Wesley; "and no wonder it should be so, while the preachers coop themselves up in a room with twenty or thirty hearers. I went straight to the market-place, and cried aloud, 'Hearken! behold, a sower went forth to sow.' God made His Word quick and powerful, and sharp as a two-edged sword."

In 1766 Wesley was at York and attended St. Saviourgate Church. The Rector sent and asked him to preach. This clergyman had frequently warned his congregation against "that vagabond Wesley." After the sermon was over, the Rector asked his clerk, "Who is this stranger?" "Sir, he is the vagabond

Wesley, against whom you warned us." "Ay, indeed, but we are trapped; but never mind, we have had a good sermon."

Another incident of Wesley's itinerant life is thus related by an old man who was ostler of an inn at Helstone: "One day he came and obtained my master's leave for me to drive him to St. Ives. On arriving at Hayle, we found the sands between that place and St. Ives overflown by the rising tide. Mr. Wesley was resolved to go on; for he said he had to preach at St. Ives at a certain hour and must be there. Looking out of the carriage-window, he called, 'Take the sea! take the sea!' In a moment I dashed into the waves, and was quickly involved in a world of waters. The horses were swimming, and the wheels of the carriage not unfrequently sunk into deep hollows in the sands. I expected every moment to be drowned, but heard Mr. Wesley's voice and saw his long white hair dripping with salt water. 'What is your name, driver?' he calmly asked. I answered, 'Peter.' 'Peter,' said he, 'Peter, fear not, thou shalt not sink.' With vigorous whipping I again urged on the flagging horses, and at last got safely over. Mr. Wesley's first care was to see me comfortably lodged at the tavern; and then, totally unmindful of himself, and drenched as he was with the dashing of waves, he proceeded to the chapel and preached according to his appointment."

CHAPTER X.

THE MAN WHO HAD BUT FOUR SPOONS.

“No prophet, no dreamer of dreams,
No master of plausible speech,
To live like an angel who seems,
Or like an apostle to preach,
Should meet with a moment's regard,
But rather be boldly withstood,
If anything easy or hard
He teach, save the Lamb and His blood.”

—JOSEPH HART.

“It is like what poor Howells said to me on the cliffs yesterday. I met him in his threadbare coat, and he told me how good the Lord was to him; and then, as if talking to Him, not to me, he said, ‘He’s been *particularly* good to me!’”—F. R. HAVERGAL.

1766-1777.

“I DINNA CARE A BUTTON FOR THE DEEVIL”—CONTROVERSY—
GOSPEL OF HARD WORK—MIRACLES—GENEROSITY—GOOD
ADVICE—THE MAN WHO HAD BUT FOUR SILVER TEASPOONS
—WESLEY’S HOUSE.

“OH, Janet, where have ye been, woman? I have not seen ye at the kirk for long,” a Scotch minister asked one of his congregation.

“I go among the Methodists,” replied Janet.

“Among the Methodists! what gude get ye there, woman?”

“Glory to God, I do get gude; for God for Christ’s sake has forgiven me a’ my sins.”

“Ah! Janet, be not high-minded, but fear; the devil is a cunning adversary.”

“I dinna care a button for the deevil,” answered Janet. “I’ve gotten him under my feet. I ken the deevil can do muckle ill, but there’s a’e thing he canna do.”

“What is that, Janet?”

“He canna shed abroad the love of God in my heart; and I’m sure I’ve got it there.”

“Weel, weel! if you have got it there, hold it fast, Janet, and never let it go.”

Janet was only one of many who had been won in Scotland by Wesley and his preachers.

There Wesley himself in 1768 preached his sermon on the Good Steward, in which he explained that we held in trust our souls and all our goods, and that we must give an account to God for the use we make of them. The sermon, when printed, was dedicated to the Countess of Buchan, who had just before appointed Wesley as one of her chaplains.

In February Wesley visited Chatham, and in August he went once more into Cornwall.

At one place during this last tour he found that the bedroom that had been assigned to him was filled with pilchards and conger-eels. Wesley was not at all

scrupulous, and must have been a pleasant guest ; but pilchards were too much, and he was compelled to seek another chamber.

It is said, as an instance of his delicacy and desire to accept even ignorant kindness, that on one occasion he and one of his preachers were entertained by a poor woman, who gave them mutton-broth sweetened with sugar. The poor preacher could not manage to swallow the mess, and he hinted his difficulty to Wesley.

“You will hurt her if you refuse,” said Wesley. “See, I have swallowed mine.”

Early during the following year (1769) Wesley went over once more to Ireland. The days of sticks and stones had passed away to a great extent, but Wesley complained more of the indifference of the people, which Hannah More called the worst of all the *isms*, than he had of furious attacks. For example, at Londonderry he says of what he calls a “brilliant congregation,” “Such a sight gives me no pleasure, as I have very little hope of doing them good. . . . The greater part of them heartless and cold. The audience in general dead as stones.”

To his preachers who were labouring in Ireland Wesley gave some sensible advice with regard to their conduct. “Be steadily serious,” he says. “There is no country upon earth where this is more necessary than Ireland ; as you generally are encompassed with those who, with a little encouragement, would laugh and trifle from morning to night.

“Be active, be diligent; avoid all laziness, sloth, and indolence. Fly from every degree, every appearance of it; else you will never be more than half a Christian.

“Be cleanly; do not stink above ground. This is a bad form of laziness.

“Mend your clothes, or I shall never expect you to mend your lives. Let none ever see a ragged Methodist.

“Use no tobacco unless prescribed by a physician. It is an uncleanly and unwholesome self-indulgence. Touch no dram; it is liquid fire. It is a sure though slow poison. It saps the very springs of life. In Ireland, above all countries in the world, I would sacredly abstain from this, because the evil is so general. To this, and snuff and smoky cabins, I impute the blindness which is so exceeding common throughout the nation.”

This letter exhibits Wesley's courage, his plainness of speech, and his tact in dealing with what he believed to be the besetting sins of his hearers. Every one who reads Wesley, and all who heard him preach, must at once understand what was on his mind, and this directness is part of his genius.

In 1769 the question was seriously debated at the Conference as to how best to perpetuate the Methodist body after its founder's death.

Wesley recommended a close union between all who were associated with him, and that upon a three-fold basis—complete consecration to God and the work of the ministry; a steady adherence to the

doctrines defined in the Conference minutes; and a stringent use of the Methodist discipline. The matter was referred to each itinerant for careful consideration.

In the following year Whitfield died. The breach between him and Wesley had long been quite healed. Wesley foresaw that his friend's work on earth was nearly finished. "His soul appears to be vigorous still, but his body is sinking apace; and unless God interposes with His mighty hand, he must soon finish his labours," he said.

On the 29th of September 1770, Whitfield, who was in America, preached his last sermon. Then he went on to the place where he was to preach on the following day. The people thronged the courtyard and hall of the house in which he was staying, longing to hear him preach. "I cannot say a word," said the dying man. But as he went upstairs to his chamber, he was moved with compassion for the people, and he paused, and, with his candle in his hand, he stood and preached from the stairs until the candle burned down in its socket. Baxter dates one of his letters from the shores of eternity. This last sermon of Whitfield must have sounded with peculiar solemnity to those who heard it, for it was indeed from the shores of eternity. In the night-time George Whitfield entered heaven. "Lord Jesus, I am weary *in* Thy work, but not *of* Thy work," he had said before this last sermon. And so he went home to rest.

Wesley acceded to his friend's expressed wish, and preached a funeral sermon for the great orator.

This exhibition of brotherly love was followed by another angry controversy, in which good men seemed to forget that they were fellow-Christians, and that courtesy is a Christian duty. It is a pity that they could not keep their tempers, and worse than a sin when such terms as "chimney-sweeper," "a dealer in stolen wares," "a designing wolf," could be applied by such men as Rowland Hill, Toplady, and Wesley to each other.

The points at issue were indeed important, but an angry religion is never one that the Holy Spirit will own and bless, and it is expressly forbidden to fight for God with the craft of the devil.

One ray of light breaks through this darkness. Wesley said nobly, "When I devoted to God my ease, my time, my future, my life, did I except my reputation? No."

The only man who seemed able at all times to control his passions was Fletcher. All the others were at times very angry. It must have wrought infinite harm to the cause of the Gospel to see its preachers so unlike their Master.

With all his merits, Wesley had a most pungent satire, and at times he employed it wisely; but at other times one wishes he had allowed Fletcher to speak for him. For example, no one can complain that, after preaching in one of the churches in Pembroke,

Wesley said, "Many of the congregation were gay, genteel people; so I spoke on the first elements of the Gospel. But I was still out of their depth. Oh, how hard it is to be shallow enough for a polite audience!" At other times his use of sarcasm was less justifiable. In some controversies it would have been far better if Wesley had quietly stated his own opinions and left the abuse to others, if they so desired to spend their strength.

In 1772 Wesley's friends commenced a subscription to prevent his being compelled to ride in future so much on horseback. "If they continue it, well," he said; "if not, I shall have strength according to my need." They did continue it, and procured a carriage, to the comfort of Wesley, who was now sixty-nine years of age.

In this year Wesley founded the Society called "The Christian Community." It sprang out of the desire of some Methodists to visit the London work-houses, a work that they have continued to this day.

"My whole life has been a hard and a varied one, from the first to the last. Whatever I have, be it much or little, has all been taken at the spear-point. Having first praised God for His pity, love, and aid, I praise hard work—the hardest ever done by any man of my acquaintance—as the cause of any useful position I may have acquired," says Dr. Parker; and Wesley might have said the same with far more

truth. He was a gigantic worker; he worked from principle as a duty, and he seemed to find his only recreation in work.

In January 1774, at seventy-one years of age, he underwent a surgical operation in Edinburgh, but while still unwell, before a week had elapsed he had begun work again. He says (and we read his opinion in the light of his own example), "I began at the east end of the town to visit the Society from house to house. I know no branch of the pastoral office which is of greater importance than this. But it is so grievous to flesh and blood, that I can prevail on few even of our preachers to undertake it."

In the same year Wesley had a narrow escape from death, and of it he says, "I am persuaded that both evil and good angels had a large share in this transaction; how large we do not know now, but we shall know hereafter." The incident is as follows:—He was driving with his wife's daughter and two grandchildren when the horses suddenly ran down-hill at full speed with the chaise. The coachman fell off the box. The horses went close to the edge of the ditch, but just missed falling into it. They avoided a cart that stood in the way, and then crossed a narrow bridge exactly in the middle. Up another hill they ran, and near the summit they rushed into a farmer's yard. They dashed through a closed gate as if it were a cobweb, and galloped into a cornfield. The children in the chaise cried, "Grandpapa, save us." "I told them, 'No-

thing will hurt you ; don't be afraid,' " says Mr. Wesley, " feeling no more fear or care than if I had been sitting in my study," he adds. At the very brink of a precipice the horses stopped. There may perhaps be a difference of opinion as to the cause of this ; there can be none as to the character of the man of whom the following story is also told.

Wesley was most generous in his use of money ; he acted upon his own maxim of " Get all you can ; save all you can, and give all you can." He was importuned to allow a cast of his face to be taken. He refused, and then the artist offered him a sum of ten guineas if he would consent. Wesley yielded, and after the operation walked out into the street with the money. He saw, almost immediately after leaving the house, an auctioneer who was about to sell the bed on which a poor man was dying. Wesley rushed in at once, and found that the debt was only ten guineas. He at once paid the amount, and remarked, " I see why God sent me these ten guineas." Such instances are delightful, and they are indicative of his character.

In 1775 Wesley took part in the great controversy which arose about the American War of Independence. Undoubtedly both the Government and the Colonists were right, but unfortunately Wesley defended the arbitrary acts of Lord North's bad administration.

In the same year another incident occurred which may be related without comment. Wesley was in Ireland when he took a severe chill. His tongue

swelled and became black, his pulse almost wholly failed, and it seemed as if he were dying. His servant compelled him to take some medicine, which Wesley swallowed merely to please the man.

In the same house some friends were praying, and the burden of their request was that, as in the case of Hezekiah, God would spare Wesley for fifteen years. One of them sprang up and exclaimed, "The prayer is granted." Wesley actually lived for this period.

This was in Ireland. Away in Kent, at the same time, a man heard that Wesley was actually dead, but he did not credit this report. He went to the chapel and prayed that, as in the case of Hezekiah, God would prolong Mr. Wesley's life for fifteen years.

Is a miracle impossible now-a-days?

In the same year Wesley wrote to one of his preachers after this characteristic fashion:—

"DEAR BROTHER,—Always take advice or reproof as a favour; it is the surest mark of love. I advised you once, and you took it as an affront; nevertheless, I will do it once more. Scream no more at the peril of your soul. O John! pray for an advisable and tractable temper. By nature you are very far from it; you are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit. If you cannot take advice from others, surely you might take it from

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY."

An incident which occurred in 1776 shows another side of his character.

Wesley was staying at the house in Midsomer Norton, near Bristol. His host kept a boarding-school. Two of the boys, who were boarders, first quarrelled and then fought. The schoolmaster brought them to Wesley. He talked to them and induced them to shake hands. "Now put your arms round each other's necks and kiss each other," he said. When this was done he made them eat bread and butter together, and thus he reconciled them.

In the same year he made his famous reply to the Commissioners of Excise. They imagined that he must have plate for which he had not paid duty, and they therefore required a particular statement of what he possessed. John Wesley replied:—

"SIR,—I have *two* silver teaspoons at London, and *two* at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many round me want bread. I am, sir,

Your most humble servant,

JOHN WESLEY."

One of these silver spoons was on view at City Road Chapel during the Centenary celebration (March 1891).

When we remember that Wesley had frequent opportunities of enriching himself without any suspicion of avarice, we can only admire the self-sacrifice of the

man who thought so little of himself, and dispensed with what others in his position considered necessities of life. There is a poverty which is truly noble, and such was that of Wesley. Honour the man who had but four silver spoons!

In the year 1777 Wesley laid the foundation-stone of City Road Chapel, which has been ever since the cathedral of Methodism. Beside the house stands Wesley's own house, which may be here referred to.

The visitor is struck by the fact that what articles of Wesley's furniture remain are simple but good. The ceilings in the rooms are also far above the ordinary height. In the lower room stands Wesley's bureau, for which a sum of £2000 was offered in vain. Upon the inside of the doors of this piece of furniture there are, or were, portraits of Wesley's friends that were placed there probably by his own hands.

Some years since the writer visited this house, and after the lapse of a week he was there again. During the interval some pious visitor had abstracted one of the portraits. The courteous custodian (Rev. F. J. Murrell) informed the writer that a few weeks before the visit referred to, an American lady had unsuccessfully endeavoured to be left alone in the room. Finding her desire useless, this lady openly confessed her purpose. "Could you not give me a tiny piece of wood off this bureau?" she asked; "a little knob, just to exhibit in America while lecturing?"

In a cupboard upstairs is Wesley's large teapot,

which will perhaps hold a gallon ; the lid of this has been abstracted, and it is believed by some American visitor. The teapot is a curiosity, for on the one side there is printed the grace before meat, and upon the other grace after meat. There is a legend that when Wesley supposed that his preachers had taken sufficient tea, he reversed the teapot.

Wesley's chair, writing-table, clock, and some other articles of furniture, are all preserved.

It is not difficult, with the help of a little imagination, to realise the house as Wesley saw it ; to imagine him writing at the bureau, sitting in the chair which is still preserved, or passing from the tiny bedroom in which he died into the smaller study, which was then filled with books. One would have liked to have seen the volumes themselves and talked to Wesley about them. In his journals he now and then expresses his opinion of various books, and these are among the most interesting portion of his writings. It is a pity that there are not more of them. But how delightful it would have been to have heard Wesley himself speak about these books !

Some one called books "potted ideas." One would have liked to have tasted Wesley's extract of the choice volumes that stood upon the now empty shelves. Alas ! that cannot be now.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAN WHO HEADED NOT SNEERS.

“Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken ;
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages—all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done.”

—H. BONAR.

“As God is love, love must be all—
Heaven's choicest gem, earth's brightest crown ;
Then, till our breath He shall recall,
And bid us lay life's labour down,
Wherever we may rest or rove,
Let words and thoughts and deeds be love.”

—V. J. CHESTERWOOD.

1778–1786.

THE COUNTRY IN PERIL—ANSWERS TO PRAYER—DR. JOHNSON—
“I HEED NOT YOUR SNEERS MORE THAN A BUTTERFLY”—
THE MATERIALS OF WHICH CHURCHES ARE BUILT—SINGING
WELL—HIS OPINION OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

IN the year 1778 John Wesley first issued a magazine of his own. This was a monthly, and was first called the *Arminian Magazine*. All through his life Wesley was a successful writer, and without a doubt the *Arminian Magazine* did not a little to consolidate his work.

And there was need of every useful agency for the

good of the people, for the mismanagement of Lord North's Ministry had brought the country into terrible straits. A coalition, which included the leading powers of Europe, was engaged with America in a fierce conflict with England, and with the usual demoralising effects upon the people. Humanly speaking, it seemed as if the decline of England would soon end in its downfall. Then God most singularly appeared for our nation. A fleet of nearly seventy ships of the line, accompanied by many frigates and small vessels, assailed Plymouth, which lay helplessly at their mercy. Only two cannons were mounted on the walls, the artillery had but two rounds of powder, and the English fleet was absent at sea. After an unmeaning demonstration before the town, the enemy retired without inflicting any damage. This inexplicable behaviour was regarded by Wesley and others as an answer to prayer. Wesley's opinion of the crisis is thus expressed: "It is the judgment of many that since the time of the Invincible Armada Great Britain and Ireland were never in such danger from foreign enemies as they are at this day."

Among the Methodists one hour per week was set apart for special prayer during the crisis, and many of them believed that the remarkable deliverance of Plymouth was an answer to their prayers.

"The salt preserveth the sea, and the saints uphold the earth ;
Their prayers are the thousand pillars that prop the canopy of
nature.

Verily an hour without prayer from some terrestrial mind
Were a curse in the calendar of time, a spot of the blackness of
darkness.

Perchance the terrible day, when the world must rock into ruins,
Will be one unwhitened by prayer—shall He find faith on the
earth?

For there is an economy of mercy, as of wisdom and power and
means;

Neither is any blessing granted unbesought from the treasury of
all good.

Wherefore, pray, O creature! for many and great are thy wants;
Thy mind, thy conscience, and thy being, thy rights commend
thee unto prayer;

The cure of all cares, the grand panacea for all pains,
Doubt's destroyer, ruin's remedy, the antidote to all anxieties."

Another antagonist against whom all Christian people were called upon to fight was the infidelity which had spoken through Voltaire. Wesley heard that one of King George's chaplains actually intended to publish a complete edition of Voltaire's infidel works. This excited Wesley to just indignation, and he threatened to expose the real character of Voltaire. He then, upon the authority of a friend, first made public an anecdote, which has since been frequently quoted. It was to the effect that Voltaire while ill sent for a physician who had become an infidel through his means. Voltaire said to this doctor, "Sir, I desire you will save my life. I will give you half my fortune if you will lengthen out my days only six months. If not, I shall go to the devil, and carry you with me."

In 1779 Wesley met with pedantic, pert James Boswell. The little Scot was introduced by Dr. Johnson, who had a high opinion of Wesley. With

characteristic vanity Boswell wrote, "Though I differed from Mr. John Wesley in some points, I admired his various talents and loved his pious zeal." We would like to have seen Wesley's face if he had read the entry; or Dr. Johnson's, for the Doctor had a high esteem for Wesley. "John Wesley," said he, "can talk well on any subject. John Wesley's conversation is good," Johnson continued, "but he is never at leisure. One is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do." Of Wesley's itinerants Johnson entertained a high opinion, for he said, "Whatever may be thought of some Methodist teachers, I can scarcely doubt the sincerity of a man who travelled nine hundred miles in a month and preached twelve times a week; for no adequate reward, merely temporal, could be given for such indefatigable labour."

Among the London Methodists John Wesley was greatly preferred to his brother Charles. Charles was looked upon as unfavourable to the lay-preaching, which was rapidly becoming an essential feature of the new movement. He was known to favour the idea that the Methodists should remain in the Established Church, which a growing section disapproved of. Then, too, Charles's sons, who had inherited their father's musical genius, were attracting great attention in London society. The young men conducted in their father's house a series of concerts, which thing was

an offence to many members of the London Methodist Society. Altogether, Charles Wesley was a smaller man, mentally and spiritually, than his brother, and he did not possess the talent of making friends, which is the essential qualification of a Christian teacher. This must have added not a little to John's anxieties.

John himself was a trifle arbitrary at times, and inclined to exercise absolute authority, and that sometimes unjustly. In 1779, for example, he expelled one of his preachers for a trifling disobedience to Wesley's rules, which ought to have been overlooked. It is thought that in taking this unjust step Wesley suffered himself to be guided by his brother Charles. At any rate, Charles prayed publicly for his brother thus, "Lord, preserve him from his rebellious sons. Though they curse him, do Thou bless him. Though they wish his death, do Thou prolong his life. Lord, stand between the living and the dead, and let not the curse of pride destroy them."

After all, the offender had merely refused to permit a clergyman to preach at the Bath Chapel, alleging that the arrangements made by the Conference ought not to be set aside by John Wesley's *ipse dixit*.

At one time Wesley's strong fostering care was needful for the growth of the Methodist body, but in this case, at least, he was certainly unjust and arbitrary.

At the next Conference, 1780, John Wesley indeed restored the expelled man, but this step was much to his brother's annoyance. Whatever he had been in

the past, Charles Wesley, upon this and some other occasions, was not the best adviser possible for his brother.

Wesley could speak plainly when he chose to do so, as when at Bingley Church a rich man sneered at the preacher. Wesley paused in his sermon, and looking through the scorner, he said, "I heed your sneers no more than I heed the fluttering of a butterfly; but I know what good-breeding is, as well as any gentleman in the land."

Soon after this deserved rebuke Wesley was at Blackburn. He was visiting a gentleman, who took him to see a chapel that was building. "Let there be no pews in the body of this chapel except one for the leading singers," said Wesley. "Be sure to make accommodation for the poor. *They are God's building materials in the erecting of His Church. The rich make good scaffolding, but bad materials.*"

Of course this must be taken with some qualifications; but, without a doubt, it is simply a fact that the bulk of the devout have been poor; there may be a subtle connection between the lack of earthly goods and the felt need for God.

Wesley himself said of a concert of his nephews, "I am a little out of my element among lords and ladies. I like plain music and plain company best."

While upon this topic, the following extract from Wesley's journal will be read with interest. He had arrived at Warrington (1781), and he says: "I put a

stop to a bad custom which was creeping in here ; a few men who had fine voices sung a psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an opera, wherein three, four, or five persons sung different words at the same time. What an insult upon common sense ! What a burlesque upon public worship ! No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity ! ”

In 1783 Wesley was seriously ill, and appeared to be dying. To Joseph Bradford, who nursed him, he said, “ I have been reflecting on my past life. I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow-creatures ; and now it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death ; and what have I to trust to for salvation ? I can see nothing that I have done or suffered that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this :—

‘ I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.’ ”

After a suspense of eighteen days he gradually recovered.

During the same year (1783) Wesley was at Norwich, and for a moment he gave way to irritable feelings, that were provoked by a crowd of poor who thronged round his carriage. “ I have nothing for you. Do you suppose I can support the poor in every place ? ” he said, when his foot slipped and he fell. With characteristic humility he said, “ It is all

right—it is all right; it is only what I deserved. If I had no *other* good to give, I ought at least to have given good words.”

In 1784 Wesley for the first time noticed Sunday-schools. In the light of the surprising success which has attended this important form of Christian service Wesley's words possess deep interest. He says: “I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?”

On 28th February 1784 Wesley executed his Deed of Declaration, which constituted Methodism a legal body. The right to appoint preachers was reserved first to Wesley, and after his death to his brother Charles. If William Grimshaw survived the brothers, he was to inherit their right of control. One hundred preachers were selected by Wesley as successors to this right, and in them both the property and sovereignty were vested.

Another important step was taken this year. He then ordained three preachers for work in America. These were at first called superintendents, but in 1789 this was changed to Bishop. Wesley did not approve of the name. He said, “I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content, but they shall never, with my consent, call me bishop.”

And yet, at the end of the following year, he spoke

thus to the Methodists: "It is the *duty* of every private Christian to obey his spiritual pastor by either doing or leaving undone anything of an indifferent nature; anything that is in no way determined by the Word of God. Do you take my advice with regard to dress? I published this advice about thirty years ago; I have repeated it a thousand times since. I have advised you to lay aside all needless ornaments, to avoid all needless expense; to be patterns of plainness to all that are round about you. Have you taken this advice? Are you all exemplarily plain in your apparel?—as plain as Quakers and Moravians? If not, you declare thereby to all the world that you will not obey them that are over you in the Lord."

It may well be doubted if any modern bishop ever adopted this high tone. The fact seems to be that Wesley could not utterly divest himself of the opinions of his earlier life. He had been a strong asserter of authority while in America, and he had thereby provoked some of the opposition that eventually drove him back to England. Whatever benefits he conferred upon Methodism, there was certainly too much power in his hands. That he was good, gentle, and kind-tempered, was true; but surrounded as he was by men who were all of them able to lead, it is a pity that Wesley did not entrust some of his power to them.

Now he had almost unwillingly been driven to

take a course that he probably did not wholly like. Had the Established Church welcomed the new evangelism, it would have immensely increased its hold upon the masses. But the bishops and clergy were almost without exception Wesley's avowed enemies, and it was therefore impossible to remain in the Church unless he abandoned his enterprise.

"It has generally been the misfortune of the Church of England," says Andrews, "that whenever it has pleased the great Head of the Invisible Church to grant unto her members times of revival and refreshing, the majority of the clergy have ever been the first to check and discourage the movement, crying down as enthusiasm and disorder everything that had warmth and life in it. On such occasions the laity have been often in advance of the clergy, and have not only led the way, but have even had to bear the opposition of the latter.

"If, as in the days of Whitfield and Wesley, the voice of public opinion was not sufficiently decided or pronounced in their favour, such men had no alternative but that of becoming irregular or remaining passive and silent. They were not the men to follow this latter course, and dissent was the consequence."

In spite of Wesley, the great movement had gradually gathered itself together into a separate community, with an organisation of its own which was intended to perpetuate its life.

It had also ordained preachers and sent them out

into foreign lands ; it therefore stood before men as a separate denomination.

There was no other course open, and it would have been wise if Wesley had seen and admitted all the necessities of the case frankly and at once.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MAN WHO DARED NOT FRET.

“That was a work of joy, my soul!
O happy soul! that deed
Will rank with giving water to
The thirsty one in need;
And when the angel of the book
Writeth of this, he'll say,
'Twas for the loving Master's sake
This work was done to-day.”—KNEVELS.

“Benevolence is love's resolve—
Its deed a benefaction;
Love finds its wealth in sacrifice,
Its goal of ease in action.”

1786—1787.

EARLY RISING—CURE FOR DESPONDENCY—MONEY—THE DEVIL
AND THE HORSES—PRAYING FOR A WIND—“HAVE YOU
WIPED YOUR FEET ON THE MAT?”

IN 1786 Wesley once more visited Scotland. Upon his return journey he preached at Sheffield from the text, “It is high time to awake out of sleep.” An anonymous hearer wrote to him saying that all he could remember of the sermon was that Wesley had declared that “rising early was good for the nerves!”

In the same year the first Methodist missionaries were sent forth to the heathen. One of these was designed for Antigua, and two of them for Newfoundland. This was but a small beginning, but it was a healthy sign. Christianity is essentially aggressive, and it can only maintain its purity and fervour by an attempt to convert the multitudes that are yet far from God. While it is a personal possession, and as such must be prized, it is only intrusted to us on condition of our promulgating it. Wesley's life was one long missionary effort, and he infused his own spirit into his community.

Year after year he traversed the United Kingdom, and wherever he went it was for the purpose of preaching.

In October Wesley went to Norfolk, and on his way he called at Barnet. He drove at once to the house of a friend. This friend was the father of Dr. Leifchild. The Doctor, who was then a little boy, ran to lay hold of the preacher, but his father drew him back. Wesley held out his hand to the boy, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Wesley had devoted some time to the study of medicine, and he had become expert in healing simple diseases. In his magazine for this year he published some remedies for despondency.

He recommended abstinence from spirituous liquors, but little tea, and at least an hour's exercise per day.

"Take no more food than nature requires," he said. "Dine on one thing only except pudding or pie. Eat no flesh at supper, but something light and easy of digestion. Sleep early and rise early. Unless you are ill, never lie in bed much above seven hours. Then you will never lie awake; your flesh will be firm and your spirits lively.

"Above all, beware of anger! Beware of worldly sorrow! Beware of the fear that hath torment! Beware of foolish and hurtful desires! Beware of inordinate affection!"

This is good advice, and Wesley himself followed his own counsels. He was probably of an equable disposition, but he kept himself well under control. His freedom from anxiety amidst all his many cares, and especially in view of the terrible home sorrow that troubled him, was to be attributed to his faith in God.

"I dare no more fret than I dare curse and swear," he said. "I do not remember when I felt lowness of spirits for one quarter of an hour since I was born."

Would that all were so well-balanced!

Another entry in his journal, dated 31st March 1787, will be read with interest, as exhibiting Wesley's faithfulness and his disregard for riches. "I went on to Macclesfield," he says, "and found a people still alive to God, in spite of swiftly increasing riches. If they continue so, it will be the only instance I have known in above half a century. I warned them in

the strongest terms I could, and believe some of them had soon to err."

Upon the question of money Wesley held views of his own. He once preached a sermon on money, and divided his sermon into three heads thus: (1.) Get all you can; (2.) Save all you can; (3.) Give all you can. First of all he described how a man might lawfully get money, and then he proceeded to point out unlawful methods of acquiring gain.

His position on the Temperance question may be judged from the following extract, which is worthy of notice as a sample of his style and directness of speech. He says: "Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour in his body; therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is eminently all that liquid fire commonly called 'drams,' or spirituous liquors. It is true these may have a place as medicine (although there would be rarely any occasion for them were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner); therefore such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they who prepare them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way to any who will buy are poisoners-general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither does their eye pity, nor spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men?"

Who then would envy their estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them. Blood, blood is there! The foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood. And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood! though thou art clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day, canst thou hope to deliver down the fields of blood to the third generation? Not so; for there is a God in heaven; therefore thy name shall be rooted out, like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul; thy memorial shall perish with thee."

Upon the subject of abstinence an aged man said, "On one occasion when Mr. Wesley dined with me, after dinner I prepared a *little* brandy and water. On perceiving this, with an air of surprise, he cried—

"‘What, my brother, what’s that?’

"‘It’s brandy,’ said I. ‘My digestion is bad; I am obliged to take a little after dinner.’

"‘How much do you take?’ said he. ‘Let me see.’

"‘Only about a tablespoonful.’

"‘Truly,’ said he, ‘that is not much; but one spoonful will soon lose its effect, and then you will take two; from two you will get to a full glass; and that in like manner, by habituating yourself to it, will lose its effect, and then you will take two glasses; and so on, till at the end perhaps you will become a drunkard. Oh, my master, take care what you do.’"

Unhappily the warning was not heeded, and the man died a drunkard's death.

While he lived at Oxford, Wesley expended only £28 of his income; he distributed the balance of it in charity. Nor did he, as he grew richer, limit his gifts to the poor. It is estimated that during the course of his life he gave away at least £30,000.

He was one of the earliest and most successful of tract-writers, and by them he obtained a respectable sum of money. "By this means I unawares became rich," he says. But he regarded himself as only the steward of his riches; in some years distributing about a thousand pounds in this way. In one year £5, 19s. represented his expenditure upon clothes for himself, and £600 his charity to others.

While in Ireland Wesley met with a man who was in the deepest distress. The philanthropist spared him a guinea, for which the man evinced the most profound gratitude. "Oh, I shall have a house! Oh, I shall have a house over my head!" he cried.

Nor was he content with personal gifts. Wesley trained his people to do the same for the needy. During a time of great distress 150 persons were fed every day by means of the funds supplied by collections that were taken at the Foundry. Even the prisoners of war shared his care, for he collected a sum of money by means of which he provided them with warm clothing. Wesley distributed clothes, and he employed some of the poorest Methodists in carding and spinning

cotton. This is only an example of much that he did ; in many such ways he was far, very far in advance of his age. For after all, there is very much poverty that is not directly traceable to crime ; it is simply the effects of our social and economical conditions. That honest men should be anxious to work, and not be able to obtain employment, is surely a terrible thing. What is wanted is a gigantic social reform, by means of which "clean poverty" may be able to earn bread.

Wesley went once more to Ireland in 1787. "There," he says, in speaking of his reception, "the old murderer is restrained from hurting me, but it seems he has power over my horses. One of them I was obliged to leave in Dublin, and afterwards another, having bought two to supply their places. The third soon got an ugly swelling in his shoulders, so that we doubted whether we could go on ; and a boy at Cones riding, I suppose galloping, the fourth over stones, the horse fell and nearly tossed himself." Tyerman notes on this extract : "Perhaps Wesley blamed the devil when he ought to have blamed his over-long journeys."

While in Ireland, during this year, Wesley, after preaching, entered his chaise amidst a throng of people. A man pressed through the crowd and placed a small parcel in Wesley's hands. "It may be of use to you in your journey," he said. After he had left, Wesley opened the parcel, and found a bootmaker's awl and

waxed thread. Some distance away from any habitation, one of the traces broke ; by means of the awl and thread the trace was mended, and the traveller went on.

During the same year Wesley met with Howard,* and said Howard, "I was encouraged by him to go on vigorously with my own designs. I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance ; and I thought, why may not I do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if only I am as assiduous and persevering ? And I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever."

This is the highest benefit one man can impart to another, of inspiring him to persevering and noble service. There are some men whose destiny appears to be that they should act as a drag upon others. It would be better to be ready, in the words of an old Puritan tract, to give "a push up to all who are hanging behind."

The two men did not meet again after this interview. In 1789 John Howard called at Wesley's house in London, but the great preacher was from home. Howard was then starting upon what proved to be his last journey. He left this message for his friend : "Present my respects and love to Mr. Wesley ; tell him I had hoped to have seen him once more ; perhaps we may meet again in this world, but if not, we shall meet, I trust, in a better."

Wesley also now made the acquaintance of the grandfather of Sir Robert Peel. He had been invited to

* See "John Howard." Nisbet & Co., 1s.

breakfast, and accepted the invitation on condition that he might bring some of his children with him. This being agreed to, Wesley brought six-and-thirty of his itinerant preachers with him. He says, "I was invited to breakfast at Bury by Mr. Peel, a calico-printer, who a few years ago began with £500, and is now supposed to have gained £50,000. Oh, what a miracle if he lose not his soul!"

Mr. Peel was favourably impressed with Wesley, and often attended his chapels. He said to some of his own workmen, who applied to him for a site on which to build a Methodist chapel (and the advice is still worthy of attention), "My lads, don't build your chapel too large, for people like to go to a little chapel well filled better than to a larger one comparatively empty."

In August Wesley went to the Channel Islands. On the way back two of the sailors while aloft swore most dreadfully. Wesley took no notice for some time, but at length he looked up and said, "Swear louder, and then perhaps God Almighty will hear you." The reproof was not uttered in vain.

The wind died away, and Wesley called his companions to prayer. He prayed thus: "Almighty and everlasting God, Thou hast rule everywhere, and all things serve the purposes of Thy will: Thou holdest the winds in Thy hands, and sittest upon the water-floods, and reignest a King for ever. Command these winds and waves that they obey THEE; and take us

speedily and safely to the haven whither we would be."

He rose and quietly returned to his book. Upon going on deck, his companions found that a breeze had sprung up, and that the vessel was standing on her right course.

From Cornwall, where he landed, Wesley went to Bath. There he received a letter from one of his preachers, who was discouraged by the ill-success of his work in Scotland. This heroic man relates the death of his two companions, and adds, "I too shall probably be sacrificed in this miserable corner; and if I were doing good, I should be content (if I had them) to sacrifice seven lives every year; but to live in misery, and to die in banishment, for next to nothing, is afflicting indeed."

Wesley was just the man to comfort the noble fellow. He sent him five guineas, with a characteristic letter. "The sum of the matter is, you want money; and money you shall have if I can beg, borrow, or anything but steal. I say, therefore, 'Dwell in the land, and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed.' . . . Our preachers now find in the North of Scotland what they formerly found all over England; yet they go on; and when I had only blackberries to eat in Cornwall, still God gave me strength sufficient for my work."

While travelling in Kent, Wesley met with Simeon of Cambridge. Simeon was a most precise man, as will appear from the following incident:—

"My dear friend, I am delighted to see you ; but *have* you wiped your shoes upon the mat?" he inquired of a friend who had called upon him.

"Yes, upon all four," said the visitor gravely.

"Then," said Simeon, "come in."

Another anecdote of Simeon relates, that while riding with Mr. Haldane through the Pass of Killiecrankie, "Mr. Simeon's horse was seized with a fit, and came to the ground, throwing his rider nearly to the edge of the precipice. On recovering himself, and after a time remounting, he spoke in a striking manner of the sudden transition he had nearly experienced. They had been conversing a little while before of the things of heaven, and he remarked how wonderful it would be to be transported in a moment beyond the bounds of time and space to the place of which they had been discoursing, and so leaving this world of trouble and sin to have joined the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven" (Letter of Robert Haldane).

Simeon was twenty-eight years of age when he met Wesley in Hertfordshire.

"Sir," said Simeon, "I understand you are called an Arminian ; now I am sometimes called a Calvinist, and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I begin to combat, with your permission, I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction. Pray, sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature—so depraved that you would

never have thought of turning to God if God had not put it into your heart?"

"Yes, I do indeed."

"And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything that you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?"

"Yes, solely through Christ."

"But, sir, supposing you were *first* saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your good works?"

"No; I must be saved by Christ from first to last."

"Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or another to keep yourself by your own power?"

"No."

"What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as any infant in its mother's arms?"

"Yes, altogether."

"And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you into His heavenly kingdom?"

"Yes; I have no hope but in Him."

"Then, sir," said Simeon, "I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism. It is in substance all I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us,

we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.”

One wishes that, instead of angry fighting, Christian men would take the pains to find out what their opponents really do believe. Questions of doctrine are important, but if a man holds the creed that Wesley here expressed, surely any Christian man should be able to wish him God speed. The disunion of Christians, and their disposition to contend for the faith of Christ in the spirit of Satan, is surely wrong and must work harm.

All who hold the doctrines that cluster round the Cross ought surely to be able to differ upon smaller points without violating the law of love.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DISSENTER IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

“Oh, weak and weary one, whose fainting heart
Hath oft forgotten that thy Saviour lives,
And liveth evermore to plead for thee ;
There shall be hours when others cannot give
One drop of comfort to thy parching lip.
Wilt thou not then remember He hath said,
‘I have prayed for thee?’”—A. P. CARTER.

“Though baffled, beaten for a time,
From each defeat we gain
A strength that makes the strife sublime
And takes away its pain.

1787-1790.

EARLY RISING—WESLEY ON DRESS—TOUCHING A NETTLE—
STRANGE NOISES—THE DEVIL A DISTURBER—THE QUES-
TION OF MONEY—PRAYER IN MIDST OF A MEAL.

IN November 1787 Wesley was confronted with another difficulty. He had all along desired to remain in communion with the Church of England, but when the mob broke into his chapels, he found that he could obtain no redress. The Toleration Act, which secured liberty of conscience to the Protestant Dissenters, gave

him no relief, and therefore Wesley was compelled to license both his chapels and preachers. A smaller annoyance was, that while in London, although there were three or four preachers in his house, not one came down at half-past five in the morning. The veteran of eighty-four years therefore preached himself, and henceforward required, "(1) that every one under my roof should go to bed at nine; (2) that every one might attend the morning preaching; and so they have done ever since." Upon the subject of early rising Wesley was most emphatic. "Lying for nine hours in bed," he thought, "soddens and parboils the flesh, and sows the seeds of numerous disorders; of all nervous diseases in particular—as weakness, faintness, lowness of spirits, nervous headaches, and consequent weakness of sight."

Against his opinion may be set that of the divine who rose so early in the morning that all the day he felt virtuous beyond belief or experience. Indeed, the deed was such a source of pride and self-complacency, that he resolved never to do it again. Charles Lamb, too, describes as a popular fallacy the saying, "That we should rise with the lark." "At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night-gear and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins," he says, "we are not naturalist enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman, that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises, we take ten or half after ten (eleven, of course,

during this Christmas solstice) to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half-hour's good consideration."

Wesley was not only emphatic in insisting upon the duty of early rising in his magazine, but in its pages he spoke thus upon the subject of dress: "Have not many of you grown finer as fast as you have grown rich? Witness the profusion of ribbons, gauze, or linen about your heads! Are you not as fashionably dressed as others of your rank that are no Methodists? Do you ask, 'But may we not as well buy fashionable things as unfashionable?' I answer, 'Not if they give you a bold, immodest look, as those huge hats, bonnets, head-dresses do.' No Christian can afford to waste any part of the substance which God has intrusted him with. Oh, ye pretty triflers, I entreat you not to do the devil's work any longer!"

On the 29th of March 1788 Charles Wesley died. A fortnight after this bereavement, John Wesley attempted to give out the hymn, "Come, O Thou Traveller Unknown." When he came to the lines—

"My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee,"

Wesley burst into a flood of tears, covered his face with his hands, and sat down in the pulpit. The sympathetic congregation shared his emotion. After a time he recovered his composure and finished the service.

During this year it is said that Wesley contributed at least two hundred guineas to the support of his brother's widow ; indeed, he was kind to her until his death.

As an instance of Wesley's humility, it is said that on one occasion a young man complained in his presence of the conduct of some of the senior preachers. This was resented, but Wesley interposed, "I will thank the youngest man among you to tell me of any fault you may see in me," he said ; "in doing so, I shall consider him as my best friend."

It is related that Wesley, in order to furnish an object-lesson, said to one of his itinerants, "Tommy, touch that," pointing to a dock as he spoke. Tommy touched the dock plant.

"Did you feel anything?" asked Wesley.

"No," said the man.

"Touch that," said Wesley, pointing to a nettle.

Tommy touched the nettle, and of course was stung.

"Now, Tommy," said Wesley, "some men are like docks ; say what you will to them, they are stupid and insensible. Others are like nettles ; touch them and they resent it. *Tommy, you are a nettle* ; and for my part, I would rather have to do with a nettle than a dock."

At table with a rich Methodist who had provided a banquet for his leader, a preacher present cried out, "Oh, Mr. Wesley, what a sumptuous dinner ! Things are very different now to what they were formerly. There is now but little self-denial among the Methodists."

Wesley, pointing to the table, with quiet irony said, "My brother, there is a fine opportunity for self-denial!"

Two women near Billingsgate Market were quarrelling most furiously, and employing language after the manner of fishwives.

"Pray, sir, let us go; I cannot stand it," said Wesley's friend; "I cannot stand it."

Wesley looked calmly at the angry women, and with a true discernment he said, "Stay, Sammy, stay, and learn how to preach." For after all, the language of the pulpit, to be forceful, must be that of the common people—must indeed savour less of the academy than of the market.

Charles Wesley at one of the early Conferences was irritated by a man who rose and related his religious experience at great length. Charles exclaimed, "Stop that man from speaking, and let us attend to business." As this was not done, and the man continued, Charles Wesley burst out again, "Unless he stops, I'll leave the Conference."

"Reach him his hat," said John Wesley quietly, and thus calmed his irritable brother.

Charles Wesley died on the 29th of March.

John Wesley during that month was at Bristol. On Thursday evening, 6th of March, he was preaching upon Slavery. He writes, "About the middle of the discourse, while there was on every side attention as still as night, a vehement noise arose, none can tell

why, and shot like lightning through the congregation. The terror and confusion were inexpressible. You might have imagined it was a city taken by storm. The people rushed upon each other with the utmost violence, the benches were broken in pieces, and nine-tenths of the congregation appeared to be struck with the same panic. In about six minutes the storm ceased almost as suddenly as it rose; and all being calm, I went on without the least interruption. It was the strangest incident of the kind I ever remember; and I believe none can account for it without supposing some preternatural influence. Satan fought lest his kingdom should be delivered up. We set the next day apart as a day of fasting and prayer, that God would remember those poor outcasts of men (the slaves), and make a way for them to escape and break their chains asunder."

Upon the question of Slavery Whitfield was far behind Wesley. He himself held slaves, and even attempted to defend the practice. Wesley emphatically spoke out after this fashion. He called it "that execrable sum of all villanies, commonly called the slave-trade. I read of nothing like it in the heathen world, whether ancient or modern; and it infinitely exceeds in every instance of barbarity whatever Christian slaves suffer in Mohammedan countries."

Just before his death, in the last letter he ever penned, Wesley wrote to encourage Wilberforce in his noble enterprise. In this letter he called slavery "that execrable villany, which is the scandal of religion, of

England, and of human nature. That a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress, it being a law in our colonies that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing; what villany is this!"

On the 17th of this month he set out for the North. As with many who are ripening for glory, the alteration in him was observed by his friends. "I could not," said one, "but discern a great change in him. His soul seemed far more sunk into God, and such an unction attended his words that each sermon was indeed spirit and life."

The journey to the Scotch Border took eight weeks, and during that time Wesley preached more than eighty sermons.

He was well received in Scotland, and while there preached in a singular chapel that was built without any windows, and that therefore required candlelight.

On his return to York, the old man of eighty-five years breakfasted at three o'clock in the morning, and commenced his journey at four o'clock. Wesley was punctuality itself. He said to the coachman, "Have the carriage at the door at four. I don't mean a quarter or five minutes past, but four."

This arose not only from Wesley's love of order, but from his keen sense of the value of time. "I have lost ten minutes for ever," he said once when he had to wait for his carriage.

"You have no need to be in a hurry," said a friend.

“Hurry!” replied Wesley. “I have no time to be in a hurry.”

A young lady wrote an elegy on Charles Wesley and sent it to his brother. John Wesley, probably discerning the talent of the writer, replied thus: “My dear madam, beware of pride; beware of flattery; suffer none to commend you to your face. Remember one good temper is of more value in the sight of God than a thousand good verses.”

Wesley spent his birthday at Epworth, and found that the Methodists would not attend the parish church. The Rector was not a pious man, and Wesley reflected thus: “If I cannot carry this point even while I live, who then can do it when I die? And the case of Epworth is the case of every church where the minister neither loves nor preaches the Gospel; the Methodists will not attend his ministrations. What, then, is to be done?”

In the Conference of this same year (1788) the topic of separating from the Church was again considered, as if it had not already been accomplished. Wesley had organised a community, had ordained preachers, had erected chapels, and had, moreover, licensed them as Dissenting places of worship; the sacraments were administered by his preachers in them, and yet he endeavoured to delude himself into the belief that in so doing he had not left the Church. If he were right in taking these steps, of which he said, “We did none of these things till we were con-

vinced we could no longer omit them but at the peril of our souls," it was surely too late to speak as if they had not been done. Wesley was inconsistent, too; for while he had ordained a preacher who in Scotland had ministered in gown and bands, he required him on his return to England to lay aside the surplice and not to administer the Lord's Supper again.

It was, of course, hard for him to surrender his early ideas, but it would surely have been wiser not to have shut his eyes to the evident truth.

At the same Conference Wesley was compelled to deal with the question of finance.

The grace of Christian liberality was not so abundant as he desired, and many of the preachers were very shabbily provided for. There was nothing mean in Wesley's character, and he could speak with freedom on this subject. He required that the rule should be rigidly enforced that levies a penny per week, or a shilling a quarter, from all the members.

"I want to feel, like Mr. Horn puts it, as if all I've got belongs to my blessed Lord, and I'm put in for a kind of steward, who has got to look after the estate and manage it, to make as much of it as ever he can for his Master. There's some folks I'd as soon kick a beehive over as ask them for sixpence for the Master," says Mark Guy Pearce. And many reply, "Amen."

Mr. Tyerman gives some extracts that cast a light upon the privations and heroism of these early Methodists. They read grandly, and behind the

entries there lies a world of patient endurance and martyrdom.

	s.	d.
1765. Dec. 7. Thomas Rankin, two meals and a horse one night	1	0
1766. Mar. 29. John Ellis, six meals and horse three nights, shirt washed, and pennyworth of paper	2	10
„ Sept. 28. Jeremiah Robertshaw, twelve meals and horse four nights, and shirt washing .	5	3

All honour to those noble men whose quiet work and self-sacrifice is unknown in its results, save to God Himself. “Ungraceful and undignified, the face weary, and the hand heavy with toil, they *seemed out of breath pursuing souls*. The strength of all these men was that they had a definite creed, and they sought to guard it by a definite church life” (Paxton Hood).

And yet of these men Charles Wesley (to his shame be it remembered) wrote :—

“Raised from the people’s lowest lees,
Guard, Lord, Thy preaching witnesses ;
Nor let their pride the honour claim
Of sealing covenants in Thy name.
Rather than suffer them to dare
Usurp the priestly character,
Save from the arrogant offence,
And snatch them uncorrupted hence.”

The elder brother, John, defended these maligned itinerants ; he had a true sense of their value in Methodism. “I would sooner cut off my right hand than suffer one of them to speak a word in any one of our chapels, if I had not reasonable proof that he had more knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, more knowledge of

himself, more knowledge of God and of the things of God, than nine in ten of the clergymen I have conversed with, either at the universities or elsewhere. The far greater part of those ministers I have conversed with for above half a century have not been holy men—not devoted to God—not deeply acquainted either with God or themselves.”

In 1789 Wesley once more visited Ireland. He was entertained at Sligo by the quartermaster of a regiment of soldiers stationed there. A large party of guests were assembled, and during the meal Wesley laid down his knife and fork, and lifting his eyes, he clasped his hands in the attitude of prayer. All were silent as he first gave out and then sang—

“Nor may we forget,
In tasting our meat,
The angelical food which ere long we shall eat ;
When, enrolled with the blest,
In glory we rest,
And for ever sit down at the heavenly feast.”

Having thus given vent to his religious rapture, Wesley quietly resumed his dinner. It is probable that the habit of prayer even about trifles was so strong within him that now and then it constrained him to praise God. Wesley's chief testimony to his age was that men are able and are called upon to live for God in daily life, and that with the best of their powers; for this life belongs to God as much as does the future existence, and what is required is to realise God's help with regard to daily duty and suffering, and to enjoy Him while we are yet upon earth.

CHAPTER XIV.

"BE EARNEST! BE EARNEST!" OR, "GOD IS WITH US."

"Be brave, be steadfast, and be true ;
And ever as you climb,
Keep God's clear beacon light in view,
And win in His good time."

"I sometimes feel the blessed arms roun' my neck, an' He gives me the kiss o' peace, and presses me to His heart, an' calls me His son, till tears o' joy run down my cheeks, and I get a wonderin' what heaven itself can be more 'an such blessedness as this. I oftenest think that we're gettin' near the door, very near."—MISTER HORN AND HIS FRIENDS.

1790-1791.

SHEEP-STEALERS BEWARE—FINISHING WELL—SINGING WHILE DYING—GOD IS WITH US—"BE EARNEST! BE EARNEST."

THE close of Wesley's eventful life was full of honour and of work. Everywhere he was received with profound respect, and crowds followed him from one town to another. He had long since lived down opposition and enmity; it seemed as if God had granted to His servant a time of quiet rest before calling him to higher service.

His last open-air sermon was preached at Winchelsea, beneath an ash tree in the churchyard. This tree was long protected by the Vicar of the parish,

who had sometimes to threaten those who came to cut away portions of it. The sermon was preached on the 5th of October 1790.

Five days afterwards Wesley went to Colchester, where he found that the clergyman had assailed the Methodist Society. By gifts and bribes he had sought to entice people from the chapel. Wesley heard of this, and in his sermon, knowing that the clergyman was present, he said, "I understand there is a sheep-stealer in Colchester who takes both sheep and lambs from his neighbour's fold at will. Now, I charge this man to desist, or to meet me and answer for his deeds at the bar of God in the day of judgment."

Wesley here commended the singing, and said to the people, "It gives me a great pleasure to find that you have not lost your singing, neither men nor women. You have not forgotten a single note. And I hope, by the assistance of God, which enables you to sing well, you may do all other things as well."

The end of his arduous life was almost come. He had expressed a wish in verse that he might be able to work right up to the end of his life. He was not disappointed.

On Thursday, 17th February 1791, he preached at Lambeth from the text, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." He took cold, but the next day he preached at Chelsea from the words, "The King's business requireth haste." Once or twice during the

service he was compelled to pause. He told the people that the cold had so affected his preaching that he could not speak without frequent pauses.

On the Sunday he was so unwell that he was compelled to lie down.

On Monday, 21st February, he felt himself better, and, in spite of the entreaties of his friends, he went to Twickenham.

On Tuesday he preached once more, and this time his text was, “We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

The following day, Wednesday, February 23rd, he set out for Leatherhead. There he preached in the dining-room of a magistrate from the words, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near.” This was his last sermon, and no more appropriate text could have been selected by the great evangelist wherewith to conclude his ministry.

On Thursday he went to Balham, and on Friday, after his return to City Road, he saw a doctor. Saturday he was very drowsy, but on Sunday he seemed so much better that he got up and sat in his chair. He repeated a verse from one of his brother’s hymns—

“Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And oh! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end.”

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,” he repeated emphatically.

His friends exhausted him by talking too much, and he then lay down again. In the afternoon he said, "When at Bristol my words were—

‘I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!’”

“Is that your language now?” asked one of those present.

“Yes, Christ is all—Christ is all,” he replied. He then dozed off, but even in his sleep he seemed to be preaching or meeting with his classes.

In the evening he got up again and sat in his chair. “How necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation,” he said.

“‘I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.’

We must be justified by faith, and then go on to full sanctification.”

The next day his weakness increased. Once or twice he repeated with a low distinct utterance, “There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus.” He referred to the text, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. viii. 9). He added with affecting solemnity, “That is the foundation, the only foundation; there is no other.”

The next morning, Tuesday, March 1, found him

very weak, but he said that he felt no pain. He began to sing :—

“ All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored !
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our Omnipotent Lord !
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace.

Oh, wouldst Thou again be made known,
Again in Thy spirit descend,
And set up in each of Thy own
A kingdom that never shall end !
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to Thy sway.”

“ I want to write,” he said.

But he could not use a pen when one was brought.

“ Let me write for you,” said Miss Ritchie. “ Tell me what you wish to say.”

“ Nothing, but that God is with us,” he answered.

In the afternoon he got up, and, while his clothes were being arranged for him, he burst once more into glad song :—

“ I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath ;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God ; He made the sky
And earth and seas, with all their train.
His truth for ever stands secure ;
He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain."

Then in a weak voice he said, " Lord, Thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that 'Thou loosest tongues.'"

He began again to sing—

" To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree."

Then his voice failed, his mind wandered, and he said, " Now we have done. Let us all go."

He was laid in his bed, and after a short sleep he said, " Pray and praise ! " He often repeated " Pray and praise ! " .

He endeavoured to speak, but his friends could not understand what he meant. He lifted his arm " in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, ' The best of all is, God is with us. ' "

His brother's widow moistened his lips, and he broke out into the thanksgiving that he had been accustomed to use after meals, " We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all Thy mercies. Bless the Church and King, and grant us all truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever."

After a pause he said, "The clouds drop fatness;" and after another interval of silence he added, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge! Pray and praise!"

Thus the language of Scripture came to his mind and expressed the feelings of his soul at his last moments; indeed, there are no words upon which a man can die save upon the words of Holy Writ.

During the night the dying man attempted to repeat the forty-sixth Psalm. He was frequently heard to say, "I'll praise—I'll praise."

On Wednesday morning, 2nd March 1791, at ten o'clock he said "Farewell." One of the company was repeating, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and this heir of glory shall come in," when, without a groan, John Wesley passed to be with Christ.

The company around the bed sang together—

"Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo! the Saviour stands above;
Shows the purchase of His merit,
Reaches out the arms of love."

He was eighty-eight years of age, but his herculean labours had aged him beyond his years. On the 8th of March he was laid out in state, and it is said that ten thousand persons came to look upon the face that still beamed out the love that he felt for the souls of men.

The crowds that then thronged the chapel were so great that it was hastily resolved that the funeral should be at five o'clock in the morning of March 9th.

Several hundreds of persons were present at that early hour, and each received a biscuit engraved with a portrait of John Wesley as a memorial of the service.

When the funeral service was read by Rev. John Richardson, he varied the words and said, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take to Himself the soul of our dear FATHER here departed;" at which loud sobs broke out from the sorrowful throng.

He died, but his work did not die with him. The denomination that he founded has continued and perfected his work, and has influenced all the Churches for good.

In the minutes of the first Conference held after his death is the following brief and touching record:—"It may be expected that the Conference make some observations on the death of Mr. Wesley; but they find themselves utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on this awful and affecting event.

"Their souls do truly mourn for their great loss; and they trust they shall give the most substantial proofs of their veneration for the memory of their most esteemed father and friend by endeavouring with great humility and diffidence to follow and imitate him in doctrine, discipline, and life."

His character was singularly transparent and strong.

He had many prejudices, but they were all of the head; and though they embarrassed the action of his affections, in spite of them he did what he felt to be his duty.

His master-passion was a love for the souls of men. A deep sense of the solemnity and importance of divine things mastered all his faculties, and believing that the lost are doomed for ever to eternal woe, he did his very utmost in order to save them.

Placed in a position from whence wealth, honour, and fame were easily attainable, he freely surrendered all in order that he might seek and save the lost. He therefore stands out before men as the type of an evangelist, and the main lesson of his life is

“*BE EARNEST! BE EARNEST!*”

“’Tis not in man to trifle; life is brief,
And sin is here;
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A passing tear.”

CHAPTER XV.

ON THROUGH STORM AND FLOOD.

“ In spite of rock and tempest’s roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee ! ”

—LONGFELLOW.

“ Mr. Wesley, suppose you knew that you were to die at twelve o’clock to-morrow night, how would you spend the intervening time ? ”
“ How, madam ? ” replied Mr. Wesley ; “ just as I intend to spend it now. I should preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at five to-morrow morning. After that I should write to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet these Societies in the evening. I should then repair to Friend Masters, who expects to entertain me ; converse and pray with the family as usual ; retire to my room at ten o’clock ; commend myself to my Heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory ! ”

HOLDING IN CHECK—THE SIGNAL-GUN—THE FIRST SECEDER—
THE GROWTH OF THE MUSTARD-SEED—THE BEST IS YET
TO COME.

JOHN WESLEY during his lifetime preserved the ascendancy which was the due reward of his character, talents, and eminent services. But the democratic tendencies of some of his followers were a source of anxiety, which he probably anticipated would work either for the extension or dispersion of Methodism after his departure, as they were controlled and balanced.

At the same time it ought to be said that, had his life been spared, John Wesley would in all probability have contrived to prevent any secession from his communion. He was doubtless at fault sometimes, but an eagle-like foresight was part of his original mental endowment. He could appreciate a man, and he knew how to use each man's peculiar talents and failures to the utmost. He could appreciate in others the restless zeal which he had in his early years felt impelling him to new forms of service, and therefore was tolerant of what others might consider the untimely energy of some of his followers. Above all, he had united in himself the two opposite sections into which his denomination was divided, for while he was most energetic and progressive, he also felt jealously conservative of practices and ideas. The reverence which all felt for him secured sufficient authority to hold the diverse sections in check during his lifetime, but after his death Methodism experienced a crisis which severely tested its vitality.

Dr. Cooke says that there were then four parties which contended for supremacy. "One party advocated the continuance of things as they were; another contended for strict adherence to the Church, but sought an abridgment of the preacher's power and authority, especially by the introduction of lay delegation to district meetings and the Annual Conference; a third party contended for the right of the people to worship in church hours, and for the preachers to

administer the Sacraments. But there was a fourth class who contended not only for entire separation from the Established Church, and the formation of Methodism into a distinct and independent community, but also for such a remodelling of its constitution as would give the laity that position in the administration and government of the body which is enjoyed by other Christian communities, and is so clearly sanctioned by the New Testament Scriptures."

The campaign between these widely divergent sections began by the High Church party, who issued a circular. This was signed by eighteen trustees at Hull, and forwarded to the stewards of the principal Societies in the Connexion. It counselled, and almost commanded, that the Methodists should avoid the name of Dissenters; that as loyal Church people, they should not only worship together only at such hours as the churches were closed, but that they should repair to the clergy for the Sacraments.

A gifted, earnest young minister, Alexander Kilham by name, took up the challenge. Alexander Kilham was born at Epworth on the 10th of July 1762, of Methodist parents. At the age of eighteen he was converted, and three years afterwards he became a preacher. He proved a most valiant evangelist, and especially in Jersey he encountered ferocious opposition and persecution. One man offered a large sum of money to any one who would plunge the preacher into the water.

On another occasion he was preaching at Scarborough, and half a pound of gunpowder was placed under the spot where he usually stood, with a train secretly laid to some distance. Without knowing why he did so, Kilham did not stand in his accustomed place, and so escaped with his life. Altogether a most earnest, gifted man, and such as any Christian community would have been glad to welcome into its midst.

Kilham prepared a reply to the High Church manifesto, in which he pointed out that the Methodists were *de facto* Dissenters, and he urged that they should not be afraid to avow it. This address was read and approved by many others who shared Kilham's sentiments. The success of this pamphlet led the reformer to issue other addresses, and all the more because he suspected that some of the Methodists intended to introduce government by bishops, as in America.

Judicious treatment and concession, such as John Wesley would have adopted, might have retained Kilham as one of the most useful Methodist ministers; but unfortunately this born leader of men was harshly, and even unjustly, dealt with, and in the year 1796 he was expelled. He did not go forth alone, and after that all efforts at conciliation had failed, his friends purchased a Baptist chapel at Leeds for him. This was opened by Mr. Kilham on the 5th of May 1797. Three Methodist preachers joined him in his design,

and these, with many sympathisers, on the 9th of August 1797 formed themselves into the Methodist New Connexion. On the 20th of December 1798 Kilham died, probably a victim to the anxieties and exhaustive labours of his previous life. But the denomination that he had founded still survives, and survives to see its principles generally accepted by the Methodists of every land. Upon the marble monument which has been erected to Kilham's memory he is termed, "A faithful servant in the vineyard of Christ, a zealous defender of the rights of the people against attempts to force on them a priestly domination. Deserted by many of his friends, he lived to see the cause triumph in which he died a martyr."

Such a secession might well have proved fatal to any community, but the Methodist body survived in spite of this loss, which, however, it keenly felt.

The same spirit which drove out Kilham and his friends in the year 1810 expelled the founder of the Primitive Methodists. This good man, Mr. Hugh Bourne by name, was a local preacher in the Potteries, and he preached much in the open air and held camp-meetings. This method of reaching the masses was greatly disapproved of by the Wesleyan authorities, and the large number of converts that clustered around Hugh Bourne gradually settled down into an independent Church.

Twenty years after this, another of the born leaders who from time to time appear amidst the Churches arose in Cornwall. This man, William O'Bryan by name, was immensely successful, and his followers are known as Bible Christians. This title, which may seem somewhat arrogant, was originally a nickname, which has become so well known, that to refuse it would now be impossible.

But the most recent and serious of all secessions that the Methodist body has known was that which took place in the year 1849. Then more than 100,000 persons seceded, and established a vigorous and independent community.

It is pleasing to observe that, instead of secessions, Methodism is now steadily endeavouring to reunite into a grand federation all its several Churches, a design to which we cannot but wish well;—for the uniting of those who hold essentially the same faith for service against a common foe is the highest success that is possible.

The divisions of Christians are often upon most minute and absurd grounds. It would be the most notable triumph of the present era if all who hold the cardinal doctrines of the Reformation could be banded together in a loving, living fellowship. That may be by-and-by, but as it will not yet awhile be attained, it must be for the advantage of all the Churches if the Methodists are thus united. For then much of the strength, money, and time that

is spent in merely sectional purposes would be better employed to influence the world for Christ.

We are not writing a history of Methodism, but we cannot refrain from quoting some remarkable statistics which show how marvellously the opinions of Wesley have prospered.

In the year 1791, when Wesley entered into rest, there were in Great Britain 312 ministers and 79,000 Methodists. In America there were 238 ministers and 55,589 members. Altogether in Great Britain and America there were 540 ministers, 1000 local preachers, and 134,589 members of Society.

To-day (1891) there are 39,408 ministers and 6,122,564 members of Society scattered throughout the world.

From the *Methodist Times* we extract the following statistics:—

GENERAL STATISTICS.

<i>Wesleyan Methodists—</i>	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
Great Britain	2,004	512,440
Ireland	232	25,976
Foreign Missions	366	39,144
French Conference	36	1,504
South African Conference	171	43,510
West Indian Conferences	90	48,378
Australasian Conferences	618	89,206
<i>Methodist New Connexion—</i>		
England	186	32,893
Ireland	10	1,076
Missions	6	1,806
<i>Bible Christian.—</i>		
England	180	26,466
Australia, China, &c.	91	5,869

Primitive Methodists—

England, &c.	1,049	193,658
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United Methodist Free Churches—

Home Districts	345	73,752
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Foreign Districts	72	11,709
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<i>Wesleyan Reform Union</i>	19	8,096
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<i>Independent Methodists</i>	335	6,606
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*United States—**Episcopal Churches*

Methodist Episcopal Church	14,135	2,219,062
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Methodist Episcopal Church, South	4,687	1,132,480
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African Methodist Episcopal Church	2,550	405,000
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African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	2,110	314,000
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Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church of America	1,729	165,000
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Evangelical Association	1,121	137,697
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United Brethren Church	1,566	195,278
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Union American Methodist Episcopal Church	40	3,660
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<i>Non-Episcopal Churches</i>	4,072	201,264
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Canada—

Methodist Church in Canada	1,588	227,034
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Totals	39,408	6,122,564
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Total of ministers and members, 6,161,972.

DETAILED STATISTICS OF THE CHURCHES.

WESLEYAN METHODISTS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

8,152 Chapels and Preaching Places.

2,096 Ministers.

16,038 Local Preachers.

477,615 Members (including those on trial).

7,257 Sunday-Schools.

132,067 Officers and Teachers.

957,710 Scholars.

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONFERENCE (HOME AND FOREIGN).

- 5,858 Chapels and Preaching Places.
- 1,049 Travelling Preachers.
- 16,317 Local Preachers.
- 193,658 Members of Society.
- 580,764 Hearers.
- 4,234 Sunday-Schools.
- 64,727 Teachers.
- 431,868 Scholars.

UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCHES (HOME STATIONS ONLY).

- 1,333 Chapels and Preaching Rooms.
- 345 Ministers.
- 3,046 Local Preachers.
- 73,752 Members.
- 1,215 Sunday-Schools.
- 25,566 Teachers.
- 191,707 Scholars.

METHODIST NEW CONNEXION.

- 575 Chapels.
- 202 Ministers.
- 1,249 Local Preachers.
- 35,775 Members and Probationers.
- 467 Sunday-Schools.
- 11,345 Teachers.
- 88,761 Scholars.

BIBLE CHRISTIAN CONNEXION (HOME AND ABROAD).

- 1,011 Chapels and Preaching Places.
- 271 Itinerant Preachers.
- 1,899 Local Preachers.
- 31,506 Members (including on trial).
- 9,017 Teachers.
- 52,386 Scholars.

AUSTRALASIAN GENERAL CONFERENCE (W.M.).

- 536 Ministers and Supernumeraries.
- 79 Preachers on Trial.
- 89,206 Members (including juniors).
- 420,675 Attendants at Public Worship.

EAST AND WEST INDIAN CONFERENCES (W.M.).

446 Chapels.
70 Ministers.
452 Local Preachers.
48,380 Members.
249 Sunday-schools.
2,602 Teachers.
28,028 Scholars.
159,108 Adherents.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONFERENCE (W.M.).

	ENGLISH.	NATIVE.	TOTAL.
Churches and Chapels . .	122	322	444
Other Preaching Places . .	139	1,089	1,228
Ministers and Evangelists . .	106	136	242
Local Preachers	154	1,690	1,844
Class Leaders	195	2,307	2,502
Class Members (including juniors and those on trial) . .	4,709	38,801	43,510
Sunday-Schools	101	253	354
Teachers	967	914	1,881
Scholars	8,041	14,461	22,502
Attendants on Public Worship	22,946	96,613	119,559

These figures are deeply interesting. However they are studied, they are a most remarkable proof of what prayer and faith can accomplish, and they at the same time are deeply significant in their prophetic aspect.

The mission of Methodism is by no means exhausted ; it may be that in the future it is destined to play a peculiar part in the annals of our native land. Its recent developments prove its inherent vitality, and if all the Methodist Churches combine into a federation, which will increase their individual power to serve,

without at all diminishing their piety, their combined enterprise and work will probably produce a surprising revival of religion in these islands.

For while there are many most encouraging signs in the religious outlook, there are also, in the opinion of many, most grave symptoms which call for earnest and patient prayer and work. The social evils of our time are a standing reproach to the Christian name; they must be dealt with in a more resolute and vigorous manner than at any previous time. And they will be; for on every hand there is a forward movement, which, although as yet feeble when compared with what is as yet unattempted, will yet accomplish what we long for—the social, moral, and religious reformation of our land.

The extreme interest with which the Wesley centenary has been watched is a sign of the continued mandate of the Methodist people. If they will be true to their essential principles, and go to the people with a Gospel which not only proclaims pardon for sin, but which attempts to make life more bearable to the wretched, it will be seen that the Gospel is still the power of God to salvation.

During the present week special services are being held in City Road Chapel, London, to commemorate Wesley's death.

On Saturday evening, February 28th, 1891, a thanksgiving service was held.

On Sunday evening, March 1st, a special sermon

was preached by the Rev. David J. Waller, D.D., Secretary of the Wesleyan Conference. Selecting as the basis of discourse Acts ix. 15, "Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," the preacher said there was nothing more remarkable than the way in which the Great Head of the Church had raised up specially gifted and qualified instruments to do His work. This was strikingly illustrated in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. No man was more unlikely to become a Christian, much less an Apostle of the Cross, than the zealous Pharisee who held the clothes of the men who stoned Stephen. In subsequent periods in the history of the Church, Christ had raised up others who were "chosen vessels" for the Master's use. If their conversion had not been marked by heavenly vision or the manifestation of the glorified Redeemer, there had been the operation of the same gracious Providence, the revelation of the same Divine Saviour, and the gift of the same Holy Spirit. Such a man was John Wesley, who was chosen and qualified for a special work, and who, after "he had served his own generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep" a century ago. In the Divine selection there was an antecedent and preparatory fitness. In the case of Saul this was strikingly manifested, nor was it less so in the case of John Wesley. In the familiar Rectory at Epworth there were formative influences which in no small degree

fitted him for the great part he was designed to take in the Revival of the eighteenth century. Foremost for good was his mother's influence. The world was indebted to her for the religious education which laid the foundation of the eminent character of her children. No son was more indebted to his mother than was John Wesley. As a student in preparation for Holy Orders, he was most exemplary—in praying, fasting, almsgiving, attendance at the Sacraments, visitation of the sick, and all outward acts of piety. He had become thoroughly aroused to the importance of vital religion. Proceeding to show how the chosen vessel was specially prepared by the personal manifestation of Christ, the preacher gave interesting facts connected with his conversion; and after referring to his deep concern on account of sin, remarked that it was not at Epworth, nor in Lincoln College, Oxford, nor in his exemplary devotion and acts of charity he obtained spiritual fitness for the work to which God had called him. It was by opening his eyes to the way of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus, and by the revelation of Christ to his soul as his personal Saviour. As soon as he came into possession of this life, he sought to be the means of the conversion of others. The first person to whom he offered salvation by faith was a condemned prisoner. The man rose up and said, "I am now ready to die; I know that Christ has taken away my sins, and there is now no more condemnation for me." He was led on by the hand of

God, and a remarkable career opened before him. The preacher then referred to Wesley's marvellous success in field-preaching, his wisdom and foresight in consolidating his work by gathering his converts into the united Societies, his appointment of lay-preachers, and his opening of the Old Foundry in Moorfields, which was followed by the erection of chapels all over the country; not because the churches were closed against him and his brother, but to afford his numerous army of lay-helpers opportunities to carry on the work of Methodism. Reference was made to Wesley's work as a great social reformer, and to the rapid growth and development of Methodism during the century which has intervened since his death. Fifty years after the death of Wesley, when the centenary of the founding of Methodism was celebrated, there were in Great Britain 3000 chapels, besides a large number of other preaching places, more than 1000 ministers, and nearly 300,000 members of Society. The Sunday-schools had increased to 3300, with 341,000 children. The Foreign Missions which had been established in the meantime had been most successful, whilst Methodism in the United States had far outgrown the parent stock. With their founder, the Methodists in 1839 had cause to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" The fifty years that have elapsed since then have shown the same remarkable progress, as evinced by the figures already given.

In the afternoon of the same day the Rev. H.

Price Hughes gave an address on John Wesley. Taking the words "Jesus came to Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" as the text, he remarked that in that saying there was more significance than appeared at first, for Galilee was the Lancashire of Palestine at that time. It was the most populous, busy, and wealthy district in the land. From the fact that He went thither, it was evident that the evangelistic policy of Jesus Christ was to go to the masses of the people, to mix with them, and to evangelise them. This example John Wesley followed. Any one who followed on the map John Wesley's astounding missionary journeys in this country, would very soon discover that he did not, as a rule, go to the fashionable resorts; nor did he go to the sparsely-populated districts. Wherever multitudes of working men were found, there he was found. The overwhelming majority of the early Methodists were miners, weavers, colliers, and mechanics. Wesley was the first Christian preacher who reached these classes since the coming of the Friars. The Reformation failed to do so. It was a little known, but very important fact, that the Reformation only succeeded in reaching the middle classes, who were the backbone of the country. The Nonconformist bodies, the outcome of the Reformation, were also middle-class, and had never reached the poor. Wesley and Voltaire commenced their work at the same time, when England seemed more likely to be convulsed with a revolution

even than France. The infidelity of France originated in England. But England was saved by the great evangel which Wesley carried to the masses of her people, and the peaceful political revolution which we witnessed to-day was the result. The masses never realised as they did now that the best friend of their class is Jesus of Nazareth, and this, under God, was due to the influence of Wesley. It was an unspeakable mercy that Wesley was locked out of many churches and compelled to speak in the open air. There was no telling what misfortune would have befallen him if he had been treated properly. Wesley said Methodism would perish if they gave up open-air preaching, and Methodism had been getting too respectable of late. They lost their grip of the democracy in 1849 when they began quarrelling with one another. The masses were saturated with Christianity, and they turn to such men as Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Arch, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Pickard, all members of one or other of the Methodist Churches. Methodists must keep themselves in evidence, as the Socialists did, for theirs was the true Gospel. The future of this country could be secured only by the universal adoption of the principles of Jesus Christ. They must adapt their services to the people, exhibit brotherliness, and promote social reform, not forgetting, however, as Bushnell said, that "the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul."

On Monday, March 2nd, Dr. Moulton, President of the Conference, unveiled a statue of John Wesley, which now stands in front of the City Road Chapel, London. Dr. Moulton in his address said that the statue was the gift of the children of Methodism. The glory of the children was their father's, and this gift represented the filial devotion of all Methodism to him who was the spiritual father of them all. It was very fitting that such a statue should be erected close to the spot consecrated by the labours of Wesley—a statue of one who had been so great a benefactor to London. The attitude and the book in his hand showed that it was Wesley the evangelist who was before them. It was by his active evangelism that he did work for which every disciple and every English citizen must revere his name. Let them hope and pray that some one that day would be led to think of Wesley's great work, and that of him the saying might yet further be true, that he, “being dead, yet speaketh.”

The company adjourned to the chapel, when Arch-deacon Farrar, who was received with enthusiastic cheering, said that when he was originally invited to attend that meeting, he felt obliged to decline; first, because he had been very ill; and secondly, because it had been God's will that he should undergo a crushing sorrow. But the secretary wrote again to him, expressing a wish that there should be at least one clergyman of the Church of England present, and doing him the honour of desiring that he should be

that clergyman. Under those circumstances he felt that every other duty or desire ought to be put down, and he had come hoping that they would accept him as an unworthy representative whose presence was a sign of the affection felt for their body by many whom he might claim to represent. Let him further say that he was not there in any false position. He was a presbyter of the Church of England, he was the son of a presbyter, and he was the father of a presbyter, and to the Church of England he should always be devotedly loyal. He would further say, in the well-known words of Burke, "I desire that the Church of England should be great and powerful." He wished to see her foundations laid low and deep, so that by a large and liberal comprehension she might recall many of her wandering generation back to her fold. He desired to see a still closer feeling between the Church of England and the Wesleyans, not superciliously nor patronisingly on the part of the Church—God forbid that! His sentiments were conveyed in the words of St. Paul, "Peace be to all of them who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth." It was a part of God's mysterious will that there should be a separation between the great Wesleyan body and the Church of England. It was impossible to apportion the blame for this, if blame there were at all. The Archdeacon went on to express his regret that the Church of England had not known 150 years ago,

as the Church of Rome would have known, how to assimilate and control the enthusiasm which gave life to the Wesleyan movement. If the bishops of that day had taken care that the river of the grace of God should not flow into muddy ditches dug by men, how different things might have been. If they had only had the sense to make Wesley a bishop, *in partibus infidelium* it might be, how much stronger the Church of England might have been to-day! Standing as they did in the presence of God, who charged even His angels with foolishness, knowing as they did that heaven was large enough for them all, it seemed to him disgraceful that Christians should treat each other with such coldness on this passing scene of earth. Wesley treated every one with a splendid tolerance, and his example had found not a few imitators. He personally was quite sure that if their revered friend Dean Stanley had been alive to-day he would have been present on that platform. Stanley used to tell a story about what he called Wesley's dream. Wesley, in his dream, went to the gates of Gehenna, and asked, "Have you any Roman Catholics here?" "Not one," was the answer. "Any Anglicans, any Baptists, any Calvinists, any Bible Christians, any Wesleyans?" and again the answer came that they had none. Then Wesley, in his dream, went to the gates of heaven, and put the same questions, only to receive the same answers. So sorely perplexed, he asked for further information, and was told, "We

have only Christians in heaven. We recognise no other name." Whether Wesley really dreamed it, or whether it was only a pleasing allegory of the Dean's, he could not tell, but in any case the moral was the same. In honouring the memory of a great man like Wesley, they honoured themselves. He died in full communion with the Church, and on that ground alone no clergyman of the Church need feel ashamed or afraid to appear on such a platform. In his opinion, the world had never yet known how adequately to appreciate Wesley's services. There might have been contemporaneous with him men of higher imagination, gifted with more brilliant rhetorical abilities, with more of the undefined quality called genius, but there had been none who surpassed him in generosity, in manners, in a lofty devotion to duty, and in the example of pure and upright life which he set to the world. He was the man who put life and spirit into the slumbering masses of the people. He brought hope to the despairing and welcome to the overtaxed, and even the enthusiasm which characterised the humble and despised Salvationists was really due to John Wesley. He, with his brother Charles and with George Whitfield—three, not three hundred—stood in a religious Thermopylæ. Such men accomplished their great life-work through irresistible zeal, and they flashed into the multitude the electric spark of their own divine fire and illuminated the mass; and one of the greatest among such men was he

to whose memory they had assembled to do honour—
John Wesley.

Mr. H. H. Fowler, M.P., said that whilst Archdeacon Farrar styled himself a presbyter of the Church of England, he (Mr. Fowler) was there that day as the son of a Methodist minister. He esteemed it a very high honour to be permitted to represent in a very feeble degree the laity of Methodism. They delighted to honour the heroes, saints, and martyrs; but their work was done well, and faithfully done. It was no mere memory that they celebrated that day. John Wesley was a greater force in the Church and the world to-day than he was a hundred years ago. They had yet to write the last line of his epitaph. It was very much easier to estimate the progress and the position of the work which John Wesley began than to form a proper judgment of the man himself. He did not say whether the lapse of a century was sufficient an interval to rightly estimate the force of his character, but he thought that his biography had yet to be written. His work stood out in the history of the nation as clearly as the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral stood out on the horizon of London. Let him call as a witness in proof of this assertion not a man who had any sympathy with John Wesley's character, but one who might be regarded as the greatest of living historians. In his "History of the Eighteenth Century" Mr. Lecky said, "Although the career of the elder Pitt and the splendid victories

by land and sea that were won during his Ministry formed unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they must yield in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitfield." Methodism was the least result of Wesley's efforts, and, as Green the historian had said, "The noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which had never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, and the social degradations of the profligate and the poor." Wesley preached and taught in his class-meetings and in his journals the true application of the great saying of Burke, that "whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right." After some remarks from Mr. Alexander M'Arthur, M.P., the meeting terminated.

In the afternoon the Rev. Dr. Moulton preached the centenary sermon from the text Philippians i. 13 and 14. It was, he said, impossible to speak with novelty and freshness on John Wesley's life. At the same time he had endeavoured to imbue himself with John Wesley's spirit. That spirit was expressed in the text. Without that clue his life was an incomprehensible labyrinth; by the adoption of this principle alone could his followers carry on their work. John Wesley had undoubtedly transgressed the law of the Church, but all these actions were consistent in their inconsistency. Amidst them all he could say, "One

thing I do, spread holiness through the land." The lesson of his life was not impaired by the imperious demands of critics. What child would deem it right to search for faults in the character of a parent? The problem which they had to work out that day was the question, How might the lessons of John Wesley's life be adapted to the needs of this age? To do that they must be imbued with his spirit.

The evening meeting was presided over by Dr. Moulton, and the enthusiasm showed no signs of abatement. After prayer by the Rev. Walford Green, the Rev. Dr. Stephenson, on behalf of himself and his fellow-secretaries, Messrs. Westerdale and Murrell, presented a brief statement of the programme of celebrations to be carried out. He referred to the very handsome chair which the President occupied, which had just been presented to the Wesleyan Conference in commemoration of the centenary, for the use of future Presidents, by Messrs. Garnett of Warrington. The British and Foreign Bible Society had sent a fraternal greeting from their committee that morning, the document being signed by Lord Harrowby. Dr. Moulton described the meeting which was to be addressed by the Presidents of the different Methodist Conferences as a meeting of relatives. The Rev. Oliver M'Cutcheon, the Vice-President of the Irish Conference, delivered an address. Irish Methodism, he said, dated from 1748. There were now 100,000 Methodist members of Society in that country.

Compared with England, that might seem small and insignificant, but there was only one thing they envied their friends this side the Channel, and that was access to the people. Their history in Ireland was unique. They had never had more than one division, and that division was now healed. They were now a united Methodism, and there was no one who would be found to desire the restoration of the state of affairs which preceded Methodist union. The Presidents of the other Methodist bodies also expressed their esteem for the founder.

On the 3rd of March the Lord's Supper was administered. Dr. Rigg gave an address especially dealing with Wesley's views on the subject of the Lord's Supper. He said there was no greater joy in Wesley's life than was his on those occasions when in that sacred building he administered Communion to crowds so great, as he himself put it, that he was compelled thrice to consecrate the elements. Wesley was a loyal son of the Church, and greatly loved her services; but there was no slavery, no mere mechanism in his ritualism. It was a ritualism that had its spring in a soul that was penetrated by the Divine life. He would prove from Wesley's own writings that the present endeavours of the High Church party to show him to be in sympathy with modern ritualism were utterly misleading. In Wesley's sermon on the Holy Communion, published in the year 1735, when he was at the high-water mark of his ritualism, he termed the

elements signs and tokens. From this language he never varied. It might be asked, "Why then did he attach such great importance to this service?" He did it because this service represented so many great truths. In this service they were taught that Christ was one with His people; that the people of the Lord were one great brotherhood; that they received Christ into their company by feeding on Him in their hearts; and, above all, that service reminded them of the blessed victory of Christ over death. At the conclusion of Dr. Rigg's address the Communion was administered. So large was the congregation that the service lasted two and a half hours.

Methodist work was the theme of the evening meeting held in City Road. Once again the venerable sanctuary was filled from the roof to floor with an enthusiastic company. The President of the Conference was in the chair. After prayer by the Rev. F. W. Bourne, the Rev. P. Thompson spoke on behalf of the Rev. Ernest Clapham, who was unable to be present. He dealt with great vigour with the relation of Methodism and the masses, and declared that if they were to be true followers of John Wesley, they must take a definite stand against the slavery of the East End. He roused strong expressions of indignation on the part of the meeting by relating an incident of his own work; he said that one of his own members lost an order for garments at 2½d. per dozen, because another poor starving woman offered to do them at

2½d. a dozen, and her offer was accepted. If they were to be true followers of John Wesley, he insisted that they must denounce this accursed sweating. They must speak plainly against the traffic in flesh and blood of their fellow-men. The following letter was then read by the President from the Rev. Thomas Champness:—"Will you kindly say one thing to the people for me, as a man who has studied rural Christianity—studied it for years, studied it on the spot, and watched it year by year with increasing interest? I have come to the conclusion that the battle between liberty and sacerdotalism is to be fought out in the agricultural parts of the country. I look upon every village chapel as an outpost of Protestantism, and I say to all who care for the right of genius, liberty of speech and hearing, stand by those who preach the Gospel to the men who live by the plough."

From the speech of Rev. W. L. Watkinson we cull the following extracts:—

"Wesley called himself a man of one book, but he was in fact a man of many books. He published works theological, philosophical, and medicinal."

"John Wesley knew the value of the working-man before the working-man had a vote."

"We acknowledge that Methodism is not a literary Church, as the Establishment is. Methodism provides no lettered ease. If it is satisfactory to know why many books have not been written, it is pathetic to

think under what limitations much of our literature has been produced."

"Methodism may always be proud that one of her sons sat on the Board of Revisers of the Bible. Like John's angel, he stands henceforth in the sun."

"The literature of Methodism has not been imaginative, except occasionally, perhaps, in some of its theology."

"The grand feature of the nineteenth century has been the popularising of the best things."

"Columbus discovered America; James Watt the steam-engine. What did Wesley discover? The million."

"Much of the literature of Methodism has been evanescent; so is a sunny day; so is the dew of morning."

"We have two newspapers, of which I may confidently say that they do no more harm than other newspapers."

"I have long been in a Conference, and I have noticed that there they all shake their heads. It's a sort of departmental palsy."

"An American was addressing a meeting of young men. Said he, 'Look at me and see how I have got on. I came to America not worth a sixpence, and now I owe 200,000 dollars.' Wesley said he gained by preaching and printing a debt of £1260."

On the 5th of March Dr. Dale preached to a large company from Galatians i. 15-17. "The manifesta-

tions of God's free grace to Paul have," he said, "their parallel in the history of John Wesley, whose name has brought us together this morning. First, I may say that there was a special preparation for his great work in the circumstances of his birth and early training. In the discipline of his childhood and youth, a reverence for authority and a love for the careful observances of Anglicanism were blended with the traditions of Puritanism. He had been separated from his very birth. Secondly, he was called, if not with the accompaniment of very miracle as in Paul's case, yet by a miracle of love not less supernatural. He would say, 'I sought God because He sought me; I found God because He found me.' It is, however, to the third feature in Wesley's life that I wish to direct your attention. I refer to the experience through which he passed on May 24, 1738, an experience so remarkable that for many years he spoke of it as his real conversion. But for that great experience Methodism and all it represents would never have sprung into being by the agencies which have created it. The obligations which the older Nonconformist Churches owe to Methodism cannot be estimated. When John Wesley began his work, the Dissenting Churches were at a very low ebb. The stricter manners and severer morals of a previous generation were disappearing, and the movement of theological thought caused great alarm. To you let me say our fathers did not for a long time look

for deliverance. Wesley's Arminianism, not without reason, caused them grave alarm. Arminianism had wrought great mischief. But creeds which coincide in their main articles may cover widely different fields of thought and wholly different forms of spiritual life. The older Arminianism conceived of man as free greatly because it conceived of God as remote. Wesley's Arminianism was a very different sort. He felt that he was free to accept or reject the offers which in the present God was pressing upon him. For the time the older Dissenters did not distinguish between the old Arminianism and the new, but in a short time the flame that was burning on your side of the wall that divided us became so warm that it heated us through the wall. The fire rose so high that the sparks fell over. Soon we found that it was not very far from the Tabernacle to the Foundry. Then we began to draw nearer. Many eminent Nonconformists derived great benefit from the Methodists, including such men as William Jay and John Angell James, the latter of whom always had a trace of Methodism in him, and he always smelt of that fire. Wesley had no sympathy with the men who said, 'God is merciful,' and ignored His justice. Apart from God's justice there will be no mercy. To Wesley his own sin was a violent and voluntary disturbance of the ordered relations between man and God. It was not a misfortune, but a crime, and he believed, and believed rightly, that this sense of his

guilt was the voice of God condemning him for his sin, and menacing him with judgment. His conscience demanded a Gospel of which during the twelve years preceding 1738 he had no conception, and hence failed to find peace. Now his faith rested in Christ, and an assurance was given him that he was accepted in Christ. In John Wesley's personal discovery of the synthesis of justice and mercy in the death of Christ he found the impulse and inspiration of the Methodist movement. Surrender that conception, and you will rob Methodism of its secret power. Wesley's doctrine of faith was organically connected with the great doctrine of Methodism—that the spirit of God bears witness to the believer that he is a child of God. In this Wesley was of one mind with Luther, for in maintaining the doctrine of justification by faith, it had been his object to win for men the blessed hope of assurance. But the sunshine which came with Luther had died away again when Wesley came. Nevertheless, Wesley knew himself that he had received direct from God the assurance of his forgiveness, and he refused to believe that this was a special experience peculiar to himself. This doctrine seemed to him one grand part of the testimony which God had given to the Methodists to bear to all mankind. It seemed to him part of the Divine purpose that this grand doctrine, which had been lost for many years and almost forgotten, should be restored. He was confirmed in this conviction by the experience

of his spiritual children. This assurance was a large part of the power of Methodism. It gave it a host of preachers. Personal testimony to the power of God can be given by any man to whom the assurance has come. No training in theology is needed. The man who a fortnight ago was drunk in the streets can say, 'Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' He needed no commentators, no hours of leisure for this. The carpenter can leave his bench and the blacksmith his anvil to tell the story. But this doctrine did more than provide preachers. It came to the people with the conviction that, after all, the Gospel might be true. Weary men, and men who had been broken down by trouble, and despairing men, and men who were miserable because they hated themselves for their vices, and men who had become lethargic because they found their occupations monotonous—these people were excited, aroused, because they found that people like themselves had discovered the fount of true happiness, the springs of joy. It was largely on the strength of testimony to this doctrine that the movement won its great successes. If it lost that testimony, successes would cease. Brethren," said Dr. Dale, "I have spoken with a freedom which a minister of another Church had no right to adopt, and yet it is not another Church, for we are all one. In your strength Evangelical Christendom is strong, in your weakness we are weak. You stand in a noble suc-

cession ; you have awful responsibilities to the nations in which your societies are planted. Keep faith with your fathers, keep faith with your children's children, keep faith with Christ. That work of God which Wesley preached, love it and abide in it for ever. It is a great Gospel which you and your fathers have preached for one hundred and fifty years. Preach it still with the same confidence ; tell men that they live not in a lost world, but in a redeemed world. Tell men—all men—that they were created in Christ, and that when they realise their true relation to Him they will live in a new heaven and a new earth. Charge them not to defeat the Divine purposes, but to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and so to make their calling and election sure. Henceforth I call upon you to pray that the fires of Methodism may never become dimmed or be extinguished. I call upon you to let your consecration be so complete that all the fulness of the Spirit may be yours." The sermon was listened to with the closest attention throughout, although it occupied more than an hour and a quarter in delivery.

In the afternoon of the same day the Allan Library was opened. A meeting was held in the City Road Chapel, when Mr. Alexander M'Arthur, M.P., presided. The Rev. Marmaduke C. Osborn stated that the Allan Library, consisting of many thousands of rare and valuable books and pamphlets, was presented to the Wesleyan Conference of 1884 through the Rev. Dr.

Rigg, by the late Mr. Thomas Robinson Allan, "to the intent that the same be constituted a library for the use of the people called Wesleyan Methodists, similar, so far as to the said Conference may seem advisable, to the library of Sion College, founded by Dr. Thomas White, for the use of the clergy of the Church of England, or to the library founded by Dr. Daniel Williams for the use of the Nonconformist Denominations." It was estimated that the expenses would not exceed £500 per annum. The sum of £5000 could be well expended in putting the library into a thoroughly efficient state, and he hoped the Methodist people would provide that sum. Dr. Rigg gave an interesting outline of the history of the movement. At the commencement of the present century a conscientious and loyal Methodist layman came from the North of England with his family, and attended City Road Chapel, London. His youngest son, who had a University education, whilst travelling through Europe formed the intention of getting together a great library for the benefit of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Dr. Rigg detailed the steps by which for more than twenty years he sought to carry out his scheme, and in the accomplishment of which he spent a large fortune. The books which had come to them were exceedingly valuable. The library contained a rich collection of hymnology, also medals, coins, engravings, and it was especially rich in Bibles, ancient and modern. The present want was books of reference published within

the last half-century. To Dr. Moulton and Professor Davison had been intrusted the task of buying suitable modern books, towards which the Fernley Trustees had made a grant of £200. He appealed to the Connexion at large for such financial assistance as would enable the committee to make the library such as would make it a priceless benefit to their junior ministers and thousands of local preachers throughout the country. The President supported what Dr. Rigg had said, remarked that they had the nucleus of a large and valuable library, and they wished to make it useful to other than specialists. Some time since, Professor Banks of Leeds had prepared a list of books suitable for local preachers, which the committee had adopted, and which was to be still further supplemented. The Rev. George Kenyon, the librarian-elect, stated that the actual amount received was £1220, the whole of which would be expended within the next few months. He then presented Dr. Moulton with a silver key, suitably inscribed, with which to open the new library. The vast congregation repaired to the new premises, where the President of the Conference declared the Allan Library formally opened.

The fine block of buildings which has now become the headquarters of the Allan Library has a frontage to the City Road, and is exactly opposite to the London Artillery Barracks. It has recently been erected by the Wesleyan Book Room authorities, at

an outlay of £9000, and forms a most useful addition to the valuable property, comprising warehouses and rooms, used as the publishing department of Wesleyan Methodism. The principal room, which is situated on the second floor, is admirably adapted for the purposes of the library, being some 60 feet square and fully 17 feet high, well lighted, all the windows being double, so as to deaden the sound. It has four handsome Corinthian pillars and a broad staircase leading to a room on the third storey, equal in size, which is intended eventually to be used as a reading-room. The library consists of nearly 20,000 volumes, including history, travels, divinity, church history, councils, philology, bibliography, &c. There is a very choice and large collection of Bibles, which include the Complutensian Polyglot, 1514-17, a remarkably fine copy, for which Cardinal Ximenes is reported to have paid £25,000; also Erasmus's Greek and Latin Testament, first edition, a Matthew's Bible bearing date 1549, and a Bishops' Bible, a very fine copy, whose date is 1575. In addition there are choice reprints of Bagster's Tyndale New Testament, 1525-26; Wyclif's Bible, from two manuscripts, which took twenty years to carry through the press, and is regarded as a very fine copy. In Indian Bibles and portions, particularly of the early Serampore Press, the library is rich. Methodism is well represented by its standard works, and includes nearly all the lives that have been written of Wesley, as well as an original

set of his works, consisting of thirty-four volumes, published during his lifetime; also a very fine set of Wesley's "Christian Library" in fifty volumes. For weeks past the library has been enriched by valuable presentations of books, including a complete set of the works published by the Palestine Exploration Fund, recently given by Mr. Joseph Whitehead, of Guernsey. The Fathers are in force, and present a handsome appearance, mostly in folio, but in excellent condition. To the library have been added the collection of the late Dr. Rule of Croydon, the eminent Spanish scholar and theologian, and the books of the late Mr. Foster Newton, and smaller collections. A large section consists of valuable general theological works.

On the 5th of March, Principal Rainy, of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, preached. Dr. Rainy took as his text Philippians iv. 9, and mainly dwelt upon the lessons taught by the life of John Wesley. One great lesson exemplified by Wesley in his work was his establishment of the principle of the right of common sense to regulate Church methods in dealing with exigencies brought about by Providence. Long before the hour for commencing the evening meeting, City Road Chapel was filled, and the proceedings were commenced much earlier than the time announced. The President of the Conference, Dr. Moulton, who presided, read a letter from the venerable Dr. Osborn, and also announced several gifts to the Centenary

Fund, including one from Honolulu. The topic on which the various addresses were founded was, "The privileges, duties, responsibilities, and opportunities of the young people of Methodism." The Rev. Thomas Allen, chairman of the Sheffield District, who was the first speaker, urged his hearers to study Wesley's famous journals and the history of his life. Methodism was the child of Providence from beginning to end, and it was easy to see how during the past century it had been an inspiring and directing force. The early Methodists were firm believers in the Divine method of saving grace, and had remarkable success. Whilst he rejoiced that their spiritual theory was wider to-day, he was afraid that what they had gained in breadth they were in danger of losing in spiritual force. A good deal of the Christian experience to-day was indefinite, and if that spread it would turn their churches into mere congregations. If that centenary celebration brought back their old spiritual enthusiasm, it would be an unspeakable benefit to British Methodism. The Rev. John Scott Lidgett, M.A., recently appointed to the Methodist Settlement in South London, said that the characteristic mark of Methodism was, reality in the Gospel it proclaimed; the reality of sin, of conscious reconciliation, of real salvation from sin, and a practical Christian life. The precious heritage of the youth of Methodism was the gift of the Gospel, which the coming age would require. The Church of the future

would be that Church which showed a living Christ, and confronted the social problems in His spirit and in the hope of His coming. It rested with the young people of Methodism to make their Church the Church of the future. After the rendering of an anthem, "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel," Mr. H. Owen Clough, President of the Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association, insisted that local preachers were an integral portion of the Methodist Church, both in the past and present, and he quoted figures to demonstrate that the lay-preachers were eight times as many as the ministers. He concluded by an earnest appeal to educated Methodists to join the ranks of lay-preachers.

On Friday, March 6th, the closing meeting was held in the City Road Chapel.

A telegram was read from the Baptist Union of England and Wales, expressing the great reverence that Baptists felt for John Wesley.

Dr. Clifford preached, and declared that in his judgment John Wesley was the greatest evangelist that the world had seen since the days of Martin Luther.

A touching incident was the reading of a letter from Dr. Cairns of Edinburgh, who was unable to attend the meetings on account of his advanced age. Dr. Cairns intimated that had he been present he would have touched on the relation of Wesley to the German Reformation, most of all in his conversion by

hearing read in the Moravian meeting-house Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, a fact of kindred magnitude to that of Bunyan by the commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and proving that the Reformation, however decried, was still shaping and moulding the world. He would also have spoken of the place of Methodism in British and American religion as recalling the Puritans, supplying the failing element in the great apologists, as Bishop Butler, and originating the greatest and most persuasive of spiritual movements on the soil of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. On the suggestion of Dr. Moulton, it was decided to invite the venerable Dr. Cairns to publish his paper.

At the evening meeting Rev. Dr. Stoughton said he had some claims on a Methodist audience. His immediate ancestors were Methodists. His earliest recollections were of Methodism, for his mother used to tell him as a child anecdotes of John Wesley, whom she had known, and she would boast of having been kissed by the founder of the Methodist Church. He had had in later years personal relations with many of the great Methodists of their day. He owed much to Methodism for the quickening of his spiritual life, but his chief obligation was to the Methodist hymnology, which sang not of abstract ideas, but of a personality of religion. The Rev. J. B. Figgis, of Brighton (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion), in an earnest address urged those present to be true to their

spiritual traditions. They were now a great people, who numbered their adherents by millions; but let them not lessen the evangelical character of their preaching, but, as in the days of Wesley, give due prominence to those fundamental doctrines which, under God, brought about the great revival of the last century. Mr. J. B. Braithwaite, minister of the Society of Friends, said that the Church of England to-day regretted her treatment of Wesley, and the separation of Methodism from the Anglican Church. But, for his part, he considered the separation had been of enormous service to Christianity. The last speaker was the black Bishop Hawkins, of the British African Episcopal Church, who gave a short account of his own life. He said that sixty-nine years ago he got a through-ticket for heaven, and ever since the devil had been hunting for it, but he had not got it yet. He was now eighty years of age; he had been born a slave, but escaped when twenty-eight years old, and had entered the ministry in 1857. At the conclusion of the address, which was most cordially received, the rendering of the "Hallelujah Chorus" brought the proceedings to a fitting termination.

We conclude with the following opinions of Wesley and his work. "One hundred years ago John Wesley died," says Rev. J. Green. "From whatever point of the ecclesiastical compass we approach him, he cannot but be recognised as one of the most remark-

able Englishmen of the last century. The world has had time to estimate the value of his work, to test his methods, and even to analyse his motives. He presents to us an example of the benevolent and unselfish devotion of the energies of a cultured and pure long life wholly to the service of his fellow-men; and by methods the usefulness and persistence of which have, in the common judgment of men of all classes and communions, produced most beneficent, and probably lasting effects. It would be wholly wrong to estimate Wesley's work by the Society or Church which he raised, or by the many Churches and organisations that have sprung more or less directly from it. In this country by far the greatest effect of his work lies outside the boundaries of the community that is called by his name. With a marked unanimity of judgment the modern revival of religion is acknowledged to be largely due to him, and the present active condition of the Churches is confessed to be traceable in its earlier or later impulses to the movement of which he was the chief representative. The effect of Wesley's work on the sentiments of the age was very great. In addition to recalling attention to the Holy Scriptures as the one authority in all doctrinal teaching, he may be said to have expanded the idea of Christian service. He taught that it was every Christian man's duty to use his gifts, be they great or small, for the good of his neighbour, and he illustrated, in a remarkable degree,

the dependence of all the members of the Church of Christ upon one another for help and comfort. This was specially shown in the constitution of his religious Societies. He showed a surprising ingenuity in devising methods of Christian work. He taught that religious services were not to be confined to those prescribed by either law or usage. This freedom has widely extended, and is ever extending. He made religion appear no longer as a cold round of duties or performances, but instinct with life, warmth, and joy. He set agoing instrumentalities for the advancement of the moral, intellectual, and material well-being of the people, which have gone on multiplying with the rolling years. Wesley claims attention alike for what he was and for what he did. He was worthy to stand in the ranks of the greatest saints for the sanctity of his character and his practical fidelity to duty. He, by his life and labour, laid his country under tribute to him—a tribute now at length being gracefully paid by the frequent honourable references to him and his work by many writers, by the highest dignitaries of the Churches, and by the chief historians of our national life. The goodness of his personal character, the purity of his aim, the value of his persistent evangelical labours, and the contagion of his charity and zeal are acknowledged by all."

"Wesley's rapid success," says Mr. Prothero, "was due partly to his personal character, partly to the torpor of religious life around him, partly to the

appropriateness of his peculiar teaching to the wants of the day, partly, as we can now see, to the social tendencies of the day. Up and down the country for fifty years travelled this untiring apostle, stirring the people to their very depths. Riding, through floods and snowdrifts, thousands of miles in the course of a single year, and often preaching four or five times a day, he carried the fiery cross of the Gospel-message through the bleak Yorkshire moors, over the sombre Cornish wastes, through the mountain solitudes of Wales. In stables, and inns, and barns, in churchyards, and under market-crosses, in streets and lanes of cities, he preached the doctrine of repentance and personal faith. Marvellous as Wesley's influence has proved in relation to his Society, it was not greater than his influence upon other religious bodies. He did not attempt to form an independent communion, and for this reason he was the better able to breathe new life into the Establishment. As Luther aroused the Church of Rome to put forth all its efforts, so Wesley strengthened and consolidated the very hierarchy which he seemed to undermine. Out of Wesley grew the Evangelical party of the close of the last century, and every branch and section of the Establishment was stirred by the vivid sense of unseen realities which he awakened and diffused. Millions who were not members of his Society profited, and still profit, by his insistence upon the need of the Spirit's influence to quicken and purify the human

soul. Wesley shamed the Establishment into effort, and it was not long before the country was revolutionised. To the religious feeling which John Wesley inspired in his own Society and in the Established Church were more or less directly due great movements for social amelioration, the progress of education, which in its beginnings is associated with Raikes and Lancaster, the improvement of prison discipline by Howard and Elizabeth Fry, the numerous schemes of missionary enterprise, the abolition of the slave trade, the organisation of the Bible and Tract Societies. His systematic mind was gifted with a peculiar power of giving permanent form to the excitement or enthusiasm of the moment. He began his career with no other project than that of raising up 'a holy people;' but as his work grew beneath his hand, his intellect proved comprehensive enough to conceive a gigantic plan, and yet sufficiently minute to grasp the smallest details. And his organising capacity was not greater than his administrative power. The structure of his Society was admirable, and his management of the machine in all the earlier years of his life showed a happy union of tact, firmness, and flexibility. He was not a dogmatic theologian, and he took no pleasure in philosophical speculation. He was too much occupied in telling plain truths to plain people to analyse his principles. His own faith was vivid, keen, simple. He practised what he preached. 'Do as I do, and not merely what I say,'

was the eloquent sermon of his character. Personal, individual religion, and a deep sense of the reality and the need of spiritual influences, were the cardinal points of his teaching. Finally, Wesley was a born ruler of men. His courage was undaunted, his readiness inexhaustible, and his calmness unruffled. He carried with him into his personal relations with his followers a strong will, keen intellect, calm judgment, clear vision, and broad human sympathies, and he exercised over them an unparalleled ascendancy."

“Forward be our watchword,
Steps and voices joined ;
Seek the things before us,
Not a look behind ;
Onward through the desert,
Through the toil and night ;
Canaan lies before us,
Zion beams with light.”

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